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FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE COLLEGE STUDENTS'
OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES

by

ANNE SHIPLEY

B.A. Montana State University, 1961

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

1963

Approved by:


Chairman, Board of Examiners


Dean, Graduate School

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the past two decades, American employers, vocational guidance counselors, teachers, psychologists, economists, sociologists, and many others have become increasingly aware of the shocking inadequacies in the vocational skills and abilities of contemporary college graduates. As a result, the occupational choices which college students make have been gaining increasing attention, as is evidenced by the accumulating psychological and sociological studies in this field.

Why this sudden interest in vocational guidance and the psychology of career decisions? Prior to the advent of "big business," it was the accepted custom for the young adult to enter that occupation in which his father was employed. At that time, most businessmen were self-employed, and thus, their sons would naturally inherit the business when their fathers retired. However, with the increasing complexity of the structure and function of American society (relative disappearance of privately owned business and the establishment of complex occupational hierarchies), the adolescent or young adult is faced with a wide variety and diversity of occupational choices accompanied by a lack of occupational experience by which to guide his vocational

decisions. Increasing specialization of job requirements, concomitant with longer and more intensive training programs, has made it mandatory that the young adult make his occupational choice at a younger and younger age if he wishes to enter the wage earning forces at an age acceptable to society.¹

The author's interest in the process of "occupational decision-making"² was first awakened three years ago when, through casual observation of her fellow students, she became superficially aware of the conflicting forces confronting the underclass college student who must make some semblance of an occupational choice on or before the advent of the junior year.³

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The major hypothesis employed in this study is that: (1) there is a process of occupational decision-making in which most students progress from "unrealistic" to "realistic" approaches to their

¹W. Wright Mills, White Collar, New York: Oxford University Press, 1956, p. 13.

²Ell Ginzberg, et al, Occupational Choice: An Approach to a General Theory, New York: Columbia University Press, 1951.

³See Everett C. Hughes, Men and Their work, Glencoe Illinois: The Free Press, 1958 and Theodore Caplow, The Sociology of Work, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954, for a discussion of the significance of work activity in American culture.

occupational choices. The above hypothesis led the author to study the following, which appear to be closely inter-related to the student's ultimate choice of an occupation and which, for the purposes of this study, will be called auxiliary hypotheses: (1) among most underclass students there is a low correlation* between interest in a particular subject and ability (as measured by grades) to do the work in that subject; (2) among most upperclass students the correlation between interest in a particular subject and ability in the same subject is much higher; (3) students are more likely to change their occupational choices to fit their "values"⁴ than they are to change their "values" to fit their occupational choices;⁵ (4) those students who have chosen an occupation at an early age, and who, for an extended period of time, have taken courses primarily in preparation for said occupation, are less likely to change their minds about their careers even though they may become dissatisfied with their chosen career, than are those students who have only recently chosen a career and are not yet

*The word "correlation" is not here employed as a statistical term, but rather, as a term meaning "a close or mutual relation." See Webster's New World Dictionary, New York: The World Publishing Company, 1960, p. 332.

⁴See pp. 7-8.

⁵See Donald E. Super, The Psychology of Careers, New York: Harper, 1957 and Irving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 1957, for a discussion of theories of attitudes and values.

deeply involved in it; (5) a large proportion of underclass students have not yet chosen an occupation and in such cases they have come to college for other than professional or occupational reasons; (6) on the average, a student chooses a career which ranks higher socially and intellectually than his father's occupation; (7) students usually disregard future career possibilities when making occupational choices; (8) those students who receive high college grades tend to make more "realistic"⁶ occupational choices than those students who receive poor grades in college.

Importance of the study. Within the past twenty years more and more high school graduates have been making plans to attend colleges and universities across the United States. Their reasons for attending college are many and diverse, and in many cases the students have given little thought to their occupational choices, as will be shown later in this paper. How much information does the college student possess concerning his occupational choice? Does he choose a field which is suited intellectually and socially to his needs? What factors cause him to choose one field rather than another? Does he know enough about the various occupations to "realistically" choose one which best fits his abilities? These are only a few among many

⁶ See p. 6.

questions asked by previous researchers in studies of the process of occupational decision-making. However, there is very little available literature in this field, and the conclusions drawn from that literature do not agree with one another. A review of the literature as presented in Chapter II will document these points. In this study the author will: (1) propose a theoretical explanation for the contradictory conclusions drawn by previous researchers; (2) present research data showing that the underclass college students interviewed generally did not choose their future occupations "realistically."

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Occupational decision-making. "Occupational decision-making" is the process through which an individual arrives at his ultimate occupational choice. ". . . an individual never reaches the ultimate decision at a single moment in time, but through a series of decisions over a period of many years; the cumulative impact is the determining factor. It is important to note why this is so: the actions following a considerable number of decisions are made at great cost and are more or less irrevocable, and this indicates their importance for the future. A young adult goes to college only once; if he decides to major in engineering, it means that except in rare circumstances he cannot become a lawyer or a doctor. After he has devoted four or more years

to specializing in one subject it is expensive in terms of both dollars and emotions (and in years!) to turn his back on his prior decision and enter a new field."⁷

Realistic. A "realistic" choice of an occupation is one in which the student has objectively* evaluated the demands, requirements and rewards of his chosen occupation, and after such evaluation has determined that his intellectual and other abilities, economic situation, social aspirations, family background, interests, occupational desires and social skills are acceptably compatible with the demands, requirements, and rewards of his chosen occupation.⁸ The criteria by which the term "realistic" has been defined are primarily those which have been employed by Edward J. Sparling in his book entitled Do College Students Choose Vocations Wisely?⁹

Unrealistic. An "unrealistic" choice of an

⁷Ginzberg, pp. 27-28.

*The word "objective" here means ". . . without bias or prejudice; detached; impersonal." See Webster's New World Dictionary, New York: The World Publishing Company, 1960, p. 1012.

⁸The author acknowledges that the term "realistic," as employed in everyday usage, is an emotionally loaded term; however, in this study, the term is employed only in the manner as defined above and is not to be regarded as an adjective of praise or reward, but rather as an emotionally neutral term.

⁹Edward J. Sparling, Do College Students Choose Vocations Wisely?, New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1953.

occupation is one in which the student has not objectively considered the demands, requirements, and rewards of his chosen occupation. For this reason, he does not know whether or not his intellectual and other abilities, economic situation, social aspirations, family background, interests, occupational desires, and social skills satisfactorily qualify him for employment in his chosen occupation. In most cases of this nature the student knows very little about his chosen occupation and consequently is unable to evaluate his individual qualifications for that occupation.

Underclass student. An "underclass student" is a student in the freshman (first year) or sophomore (second year) of college.¹⁰

Upperclass student. An "upperclass student" is a student in the junior (third year) or senior (fourth year) of college.¹¹

Value. A "value" is ". . . the believed capacity of any object to satisfy a human desire. The quality of any object which causes it to be of interest to an individual or a group. Value is strictly a psychological reality, and

¹⁰Joseph H. Friend and David B. Guralnik, (eds.), Webster's New World Dictionary, New York: The World Publishing Company, 1960, p. 1585.

¹¹Ibid., p. 1600.

is not measurable by any means yet devised. It is to be sharply distinguished from utility, because its reality is in the human mind, not in the external object itself. Value is strictly a matter of belief; an object, the utility of which is strictly spurious, will have the same value as if it were genuine until the deception is discovered. Ultimate values are axiomatic and are inherent in human nature itself. Their existence may be discovered by social or psychological research, but neither their validity nor their justifiability can be demonstrated. They are, at the same time, the final sources of the motivation of all conscious rational telic behavior."¹²

Social skill. A "social skill" is the ability of an individual to function in a manner approved by and acceptable to other individuals with whom he may have reciprocal relations. ". . . having to do with the reciprocal relations of interacting human beings either as individuals or groups."¹³

III. METHODOLOGY

Interviews. The data for this research paper were obtained from information given this writer by students at Montana State University. The majority of the information

¹²Henry P. Fairchild, (ed.), Dictionary of Sociology, New York: Philosophical Library, 1944, pp. 331-32.

¹³Ibid., p. 275.

was obtained through personally interviewing students from each class level. These interviews were acquired during the period of October, 1962 to January, 1963. Each interview took place in the office of the author in the Liberal Arts building and was tape recorded. It was resolved to employ a tape recorder in order to eliminate the distraction of notetaking and thus enable the author to more fully observe the responses of the informants. In addition, the use of a tape recorder made it possible to "capture the atmosphere" of the interview, therefore enabling the author to more accurately compile the research data. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim, after which they were codified to facilitate analyzing and summarizing them.

The students interviewed were chosen from introductory sociology classes of fall quarter, 1962. Each student was given extra credit in his class for volunteering to be interviewed and in all seventy-one students were interviewed: twenty-one freshmen, eighteen sophomores, seventeen juniors, and fifteen seniors.

Homogeneous sample. Originally the author had planned to interview only those students who had average intelligence quotients for their class; however, the University Counseling Center advised the author that I. . . Tests had not been given to University students for the past two years, and thus, she would have no means of calculating the I. . .'s of the underclass students. Also the author had

planned to interview only those students whose fathers' occupations were attribute similar social status (following George S. Counts "The Social Status of Occupations"¹⁴). Unfortunately, neither the counseling center nor the registrar felt they could divulge such "confidential information" (i.e., students' fathers' occupations). Therefore, the author decided to interview students chosen from introductory sociology classes conducted fall quarter, 1962. The heterogeneous sample was composed of twenty-eight female students and forty-three male students of a variety of fields of interest as shown in the table on page eleven.

Research methods. The basic method of research was personal interviewing. Such interviewing was structured, to an extent, in that the author attempted to follow a pre-conceived interview guide.¹⁵ However, every effort was made to encourage a free flow of conversation and the interviews were interrupted only when the interviewees discussed topics not pertinent to the author's research objectives. Each interview was recorded and subsequently transcribed by the author; the interview guide may be found in the Appendix.

Questionnaire. Upon first beginning the interviewing it was found that some of the informants were extremely

¹⁴George S. Counts, "The Social Status of Occupations," School Review, Volume 33 (January, 1925), pp. 16-27.

¹⁵See Appendix, pp. 130-137.

TABLE I
MAJOR FIELDS OF STUDY OF STUDENTS INTERVIEWED

Major Field of Study	Number
Anthropology	2
Art	2
Business Administration	7
Chemistry	2
Elementary Education	3
Forestry	3
General	4
Geography	1
Guidance and Counseling	1
History	2
Home Economics	3
Liberal Arts	4
Mathematics	1
Ministry	1
Music	2
Physical Education	10
Physical Therapy	1
Political Science	1
Pre-Law	3
Pre-Medicine	4
Social Welfare	1
Sociology	7
Spanish	4
Zoology	1
Total	71

vague about some of their answers. They frequently explained to the author that they had never talked with anyone as thoroughly about their career plans as they were now doing. This characteristic was particularly prevalent among the freshman students. For this reason the author decided to employ a questionnaire in her research.¹⁶ The questionnaire was completed by the informants prior to interviewing. The purpose of the questionnaire was to acquaint the informant with the material the author planned to present to him during the period of formal interviewing. It was assumed that filling out the questionnaire would stimulate the thinking of the informant so that he would thus be able to answer the author's questions more clearly and accurately. Unfortunately, this was not the case, since those students who were asked to fill out the questionnaire answered the author's questions with much the same degree of vagueness as did those students who were not asked to complete the questionnaire. Since use of the questionnaire involved a great deal of repetition, it was subsequently abandoned. As the interviewing progressed, it was concluded that this vagueness in response on the part of some of the interviewees occurred because a few of the informants had not yet seriously thought about their occupational choices. They therefore were not able to answer questions concerning their future career

¹⁶ See Appendix, pp. 130-137.

plans--the fact was, such students had not yet made any future career plans. This finding will be illustrated in ensuing sections of this paper.

Organization of remainder of the thesis. Chapter II is devoted to a review of the literature. In this chapter the author will present a review of previous research projects and the limitations of such studies, thereby providing a theoretical framework for the author's research in occupational choices.

In the following chapter the author will outline those factors which the interviewees believed influenced their choices of major fields of study and, in some cases, ultimate occupational choices. Since the author previously proposed to explain why students choose those occupations which they do choose, the purpose of Chapter III will be to illustrate those criteria which the students believed influenced their ultimate occupational choices.

Chapter IV will contain a discussion of the influence which the students' backgrounds have on their ultimate occupational choices. Following such discussion the author will present specific cases to illustrate the influencing factors which have been discussed. Chapter V will contain a discussion of how the students attempt to make their occupational choices realities. Such discussion will include a consideration of the students' abilities, the

requirements of the occupations which they have chosen, and the students' aspiration levels and their probable actual levels of achievement.

The remaining chapter will offer: (1) a summary of the material contained in this paper; (2) the conclusions which the author has drawn from the research data gathered for this project; (3) a discussion of the limitations of this study; (4) suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is a substantial lack of research on the sociology of occupational choices. Although the Montana State University Library does not contain all the research available in this field, a number of studies were found in this library which were related either directly or indirectly to the study.

In a study of high school students, W. V. Lockwood concluded that:

Chances for social and economic advancement are determining job choices of future men and women with little thought being given to individual fitness, in terms of ability for the vocations selected.¹

Although this author did not study the behavior of high school students who make occupational decisions, she does maintain that this lack of realism displayed by high school students, as pointed out by Lockwood, can also be found to some degree among college students. In addition, Lockwood indicates that his study reveals that: "High intelligence produces high realism indices."² Although there was no direct means available of evaluating the intelligence of

¹W. V. Lockwood, "Realism of Vocational Preference," Personnel and Guidance Journal, Volume 37 (October, 1953), p. 106.

²Ibid., p. 100.

the interviewees, their average grades were utilized as an index of intelligence, assuming that the more intelligent students were those who attained higher scholastic achievement while in college."

According to Donald Super:

Tracing the process of making a vocational choice and adjusting to an occupation is, essentially, describing two processes--that of developing a picture of the kind of person one is, and that of trying to make that concept a reality.³

According to George Herbert Mead, self is built out of the roles we play in life. When "self-concept" is spoken of, it is in reference to a specific role the individual has incorporated into his being.⁴ In choosing an occupation, one chooses to attempt to become this kind of person rather than that kind of person, and in effect, to attempt to play this occupational role rather than that occupational role. Making one's self-concept a reality means achieving recognition as one who has become the kind of person he had hoped to become. Failing to achieve such recognition

*However, it must also be taken into consideration that one's grades could reflect one's relationship with the professor, one's interest in one's field, or one's attitude toward the subject matter of the particular courses. In this sense then, grades are not a completely adequate indication of one's general intelligence or one's ability in a particular field.

³Donald E. Super, "Vocational Adjustment: Implementing A Self-Concept," Occupations, Volume 30 (November, 1951), p. 89.

⁴George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self and Society, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934.

usually results in occupational conflict. An example of such failure would be the student who plans to be a doctor, but who is unable to pass chemistry or mathematics. Becker and Carper also point this out in their short article in Social Forces. According to them, occupational conflict does not arise necessarily when one is assuming an "occupational identity," but such conflict always does arise when one is unable to make this "occupational identity" a reality.⁵ A few examples of such conflict were encountered while conducting the interviews; a sample of these cases is presented in a subsequent section of this paper.

One criterion employed in this study of the definition of "realistic occupational choice" regards the relationship between the student's aspiration level and his probable actual level of achievement. It is the author's contention that those students, who aspire to occupations in which their chances of ever playing the aspired occupational role are extremely small, have made unrealistic choices of occupations. It is also contended that those students whose expectations of occupational success are great, but whose chances of doing well in their aspired occupational role are small, in most cases, have made unrealistic occupational choices. Peter M. Blau expresses

⁵H. S. Becker and J. W. Carper, "Adjustment of Conflicting Expectations in the Development of Identification With An Occupation," Social Forces, Volume 36, p. 55.

this proposition in the following quotation:

Occupational expectations are much more realistic than aspirations. Hence, the process of original selection, as well as the process of ultimate choice, must be taken into account in order to explain why people end up in different occupations.⁶

Rosenberg also indicates that the degree of correlation between one's capabilities and the requirements of one's selected occupation strongly influence whether or not one will remain in that occupation.⁷ In this connection, grades were employed as an indication of whether or not one's abilities in a chosen field coincide with the requirements of that field. If the student has received acceptable grades in his major field of study, in this respect, he has made a realistic choice of an occupation.

Bridges and Dollinger have conducted a study the purpose of which was to determine the relationship between work interests and abilities in one's work. The test instructions employed in this study are as follows:

Arrange the courses you are studying this semester according to your interest in them. Place first in the list the course you are most interested in, then the others in order. Please make your judgments carefully and deliberately, and try as far as possible to avoid influence by class grades or preference for instructor. Now arrange the subjects you are studying this semester according to your ability in them. Try to make your

⁶Peter H. Blau, "Occupational Choice: A Conceptual Framework," Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Volume 9 (July, 1956), p. 531.

⁷Morris Rosenberg, "Factors Influencing Change of Occupational Choice," The Language of Social Research, edited by Lazarsfeld and Rosenberg, p. 254.

judgments independent of your interests and of any class grades you may have received.⁸

According to this test, the authors concluded that students' interests were a very inadequate indication of their ability in a particular subject. The authors point out that grades are also an indication of the student's interest, general intelligence of the student, and the personal relation which the student may have with the instructor, and thus that grades are not an entirely suitable indication of interest. Nevertheless, for reasons stated in the following paragraph, grades were employed as an indication of realism of choice on the basis of the assumption that those students who do not do well in their major field of study (as measured by grades) are less likely to do well in their aspired occupational role, and in some cases, their chances of ever playing their aspired occupational role are extremely small. In this respect, their occupational choices have been unrealistic.*

According to a study conducted by Howes and Flatte:

In the opinions of the students, liking a particular subject, observing people working in the job, and actual working conditions were of much greater influence than other factors; these are major factors which

⁸J. W. Bridges and V. M. Dollinger, "Correlation Between Interests and Abilities in College Courses," Psychological Review, Volume 27 (July, 1920), p. 303.

*Of course there are exceptions who, although lacking ability in their fields, enjoy their work and are so interested in it that they are satisfied with the occupational choices they have made.

influence occupational choices.⁹

Because there was no available objective manner by which to measure a student's interest (liking) in his particular field, the writer resolved that the most adequate means of such evaluation was through a knowledge of the student's achievement as evidenced by his grades. According to L. J. Sparling: "When other elements of fitness are excluded, high marks are a better indication of fitness than low marks."¹⁰ In addition, the interviewees were questioned as to their own evaluation of their interest in their chosen fields. Such an approach is admittedly subjective, and thus, cannot be measured satisfactorily in objective terms, but this approach seemed necessary in view of our limited knowledge of the psychology of career decisions. Furthermore, the interviewees were questioned in regard to their past occupational experience in an effort to determine whether or not they may have had direct or indirect working knowledge of their fields. The basic assumption employed here was that those students who had direct acquaintance with their proposed occupations were more ably equipped to make realistic occupational choices. Also, direct acquaintance with some person who was employed in the student's

⁹ I. Dowes and L. Platte, "Choices They Make," Industrial Arts and Vocational Education, Volume 48 (November, 1959), p. 259.

¹⁰ Sparling, p. 44.

proposed vocation and with whom the student had conversed concerning his career plans, probably gave the student a more comprehensive notion of the demands and requirements of such occupation, and thus, he was in a better position to approach his vocation realistically. These criteria of "realism" have also been employed by Edward J. Sparling in his Columbia University studies.¹¹

According to a Cornell University study: ". . . students are quite realistic about picking a career. Forty-six per cent said that ideally they would like to work in their own business or professional office, but only nineteen per cent expect to be independent."¹² When this criterion is employed as a means of evaluating realism, this author would agree that the majority of students do make realistic choices of occupations. However, on the basis of information obtained through interviewing, it was concluded that a large minority of students, particularly underclass students, have as yet made no distinction between their aspiration level and their probable actual level of achievement in their chosen occupations. The author arrived at this conclusion primarily because she found a large proportion of students who were majoring in fields in which their academic average was low; these data are given in a

¹¹Sparling, pp. 5-39.

¹²"College Students' Career Choices," School and Society, Volume 85 (October 26, 1957), p. 314. (unsigned)

subsequent section of this paper. Nevertheless, W. H. Brown, in a study of seniors at North Carolina College, concluded that "Students' aspirations seemed to change very little while they were in college."¹³ Brown indicates that college students have already made the distinction between aspiration level and probable actual level of achievement. For this reason, when interviewing the students the author further explored this criterion of "realism" in an effort to either support or refute this proposition; this information is reported in an ensuing section of this paper.

According to R. M. Stephenson, students pay little attention to their fathers' occupations when choosing an occupation, and likewise, they give little thought to the career opportunities available in that particular field. This hypothesis is likewise expressed by E. D. Sisson in his study of high school students.¹⁴ According to both Stephenson and Sisson, in a surprising number of cases, the student's expected level of achievement is incongruous with the vocational opportunities available to him in his chosen field.¹⁵ These views are also expressed by Coxe in a study

¹³W. H. Brown, "Vocational Aspirations of Seniors at North Carolina College," College and University, Volume 30 (April, 1955), p. 320.

¹⁴E. D. Sisson, "An Analysis of the Occupational Aims of College Students," Occupations, Volume 17 (1938), p. 214.

¹⁵R. M. Stephenson, "Realism of Vocational Choice," Personnel and Guidance Journal, Volume 35 (April, 1957), p. 455.

of high school students and by Kroger and Louttit in a study of high school boys. According to Coxe, ". . . the percentages (of students) choosing each profession are larger than those found in each profession."¹⁶ Kroger and Louttit express this view in the following: "Neither the father's occupation nor the needs of the community is reflected in the student's choices."¹⁷ Becker and Strauss point out that: ". . . the question is not whether the applicants possess a specific trait, but whether these traits can be assimilated by the specific institutions."¹⁸ In such cases, the choice of occupation is termed unrealistic in view of the fact that the student's actual level of success in his chosen vocation would probably fall far below his expected level of achievement in that occupational field, as he would have initial difficulty in even obtaining a position in his chosen field.

According to Edward J. Sparling, realistic choice of an occupation is defined in the following way:

Realistic choice of an occupation requires that one should balance his qualifications against the

¹⁶W. W. Coxe, "Reliability of Vocational Choices of High School Students," School and Society, Volume 32 (1930), p. 813.

¹⁷Robert Kroger and C. M. Louttit, "The Influence of Fathers' Occupation on the Vocational Choices of High School Boys," Journal of Applied Psychology, Volume 19 (1935), p. 211.

¹⁸H. S. Becker and A. L. Strauss, "Careers,

requirements of the vocation in question with respect to the nature of the actual work to be done, its educational requirements, its demands on health, intelligence, special ability, temperament and character, the opportunity it offers for training and advancement, the remuneration and the working conditions.¹⁹

Some of the criteria which Sparling employs as a measure of "realism" and which were applicable to this study are as follows: (1) the degree to which the educational background of the student's parents coincides with the educational level required for entrance into one's chosen vocation; it was assumed that those students who had a family background favorable to advanced education would be more successful, as measured by grades, in college than those students who had educationally unfavorable backgrounds; (2) the similarity between the amount of money the student expects to earn in his profession and the amount of money persons in this occupation actually do earn; (3) the degree of technical or descriptive reading the student has done in the vocation or occupation he has chosen; it was assumed that those students who were more interested in their occupations would do more reading in their vocational fields; (4) the student's "plan of entry" into his vocation; it was assumed that if a student had an acceptable "plan of entry" into his vocation, this was an indication that the student was

Personality, and Adult Socialization," American Journal of Sociology, Volume 62 (November, 1956), p. 255.

¹⁹Sparling, p. 95.

acquainted with the conditions existing in the vocation and also an indication that he had done considerable thinking about his career; it was likewise assumed that an absence of the former indicated an absence of the latter; (5) the degree to which the student must support himself while attending school; it was assumed that those students who found it necessary to work while attending college would find it more difficult to achieve their educational goals than those who were not self-supporting.*

LIMITATIONS OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

From the author's knowledge of the literature available in this field, the researchers generally agree that high school students are, on the whole, unrealistic in their approach to career planning. However, this literature does not indicate any conclusive evidence concerning the realism of college students' career plans. On the contrary, some studies indicate that college students are

*In previous studies of working, married students (see Svend Kiemer, "Married Veterans Are Good Students," Marriage and Family Living, Volumes 9-10 (February, 1947), pp. 11-12.) it was found that, for the most part, such students were most successful (as measured by grades) in college. It must therefore be admitted that the students' marital status might have significant consequences for the assumption here made regarding the relationship between the students' success in college and their financial problems. However, since there were only three married students among the seventy-one interviewees, it was not possible to analyze the research data in terms of marital status. See pp. 51-57 and pp. 70-71 for a discussion of money as a factor which influences students' occupational choices.

generally unrealistic in their choice of occupations, whereas, other studies support the opposite conclusion. This thesis may be valuable in that it will provide further empirical data to support or refute either of these conflicting hypotheses. The author's research data suggest that there is a transition from what she has labeled the "unrealistic approach" to the "realistic approach," and furthermore, that this transition occurs for some students during the college years. In some cases, underclassmen have only recently begun thinking about their future career plans. Many have made choices of major fields of study only to later change to other fields. As underclassmen they generally are not very well acquainted with the various fields of study and thus choose majors without being aware of the opportunities, demands, requirements, and rewards of that field of study. However, during their four years in college, through a process of trial and error, most students eventually choose a major field of study with which they believe they will be satisfied. They have learned to inquire into the various fields and, on the basis of information gathered, believe they have chosen one which will satisfy their occupational desires.²⁰ Since a few students progress more rapidly than others in this

²⁰ Charles Richard Fletcher, On Changing Academic Majors in College (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Montana State University: Missoula, Montana, 1959.).

developmental process, the writer suggests that this is the basic reason why conclusions drawn in previous studies of college students' occupational choices have not been in agreement with one another.

Since some students who were interviewed displayed a remarkable interest in the role of the university in helping them to make wise occupational decisions, the author suggests that this thesis may provide further empirical data concerning the students' attitudes toward the role which the University Counseling Center should play in aiding them to make their occupational choices.*

*See pp. 120-121.

CHAPTER III

FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE

The factors which the interviewees told this author were major influences in their choices of fields of study will be set forth in the following pages for the convenience of the reader. It is by no means assumed that these factors influence all college students in a similar manner or that these are the only factors which cause students to choose those occupations which they do choose. On the contrary, this author proposes only to set down those factors which her interviewees said were influential in the particular choices of occupations or major fields of study. However, it is significant that all the interviewees named some factors as significant influences in their choices of major fields of study whereas other factors did not appear universally among all the interviewees. It is not the contention of this author that she will prove with certainty that the factors outlined below are the only factors which caused her interviewees to choose those fields which they did choose; on the contrary, the author proposes that, as far as she was able to ascertain from the responses of her informants, these are the factors which they believe were influential in their choices of major fields of study. Whether these factors will be found universally among other

college students is not the concern of this research project, but rather, must be left to succeeding researchers. Goode and Hatt express this problem of certainty in social research in the following: ". . . by whatever design the hypothesis is tested the results are never certain but are approximations stated in terms of probability."¹

I. ACQUAINTANCE

A student's acquaintance with various occupational fields is one factor which probably has great influence on his ultimate occupational choice. There are many means by which a student may become acquainted with the various occupations; those criteria of acquaintance employed in this study will be listed on the following pages. It was assumed by this author that those students who were more fully acquainted with the demands, requirements, and rewards of their chosen occupations were in better positions to make more realistic choices of occupations than were those students who lacked such knowledge of their fields.

Work in field. Each interviewee was asked if he had ever done any work in or connected to the occupational field in which he was interested. It was assumed by the author that working in one's field better acquaints the

¹William J. Goode and Paul K. Hatt, Methods in Social Research, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1952, p. 87.

student with his chosen field and thus renders him more able, on the basis of experience, to more realistically make a permanent occupational choice. The influence which working in one's chosen field has on one's ultimate occupational choice was expressed quite candidly by one interviewee:

Question: Are you likely to change your major field of study?

Answer: Well, that depends on how much I like it, I mean working in this field. At the present I'm, well I've gotten jobs as assistant football coach here for the freshman team and that will look good on my record if I stay in coaching. And I'm getting experience and I can more or less find out if I like it or not being a line coach. And if I find that I like it and the way things are going I'll probably, well I won't say probably, but I think I'd like to stay in coaching.

The following table presents the informants' responses to this question.

TABLE II

STUDENTS WHO HAVE OR HAVE NOT WORKED IN FIELD OF INTEREST, BY GRADE OF INFORMANT*

Grade	Work in Field		No work in Field	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Senior	43%	6	57%	9
Junior	53%	9	47%	8
Sophomore	30%	5	70%	13
Freshman	35%	7	65%	14
Total	38%	27	62%	44

*All percentages in this table and following tables have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

It was assumed that because some students are older than others, they would have had more opportunity to work in their chosen fields. However, as will be seen in the following table, the older students actually did not work in their fields more often than the younger students. Judging from the responses of the informants, it was concluded that the older students had not worked in their chosen fields more frequently than the younger students for one of two reasons: (1) They found it necessary to accept employment outside their fields because such employment offered higher wages. (2) They had only recently made this choice of a major field of study. Consequently they had not worked in their present fields because previously they had been interested in other occupations.

TABLE III
STUDENTS WHO HAVE OR HAVE NOT WORKED IN FIELD
OF INTEREST, BY AGE OF INFORMANT

Age	Work in Field		No work in Field	
	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number
23-28	18%	2	82%	9
21-22	42%	5	58%	7
19-20	39%	12	61%	19
17-18	47%	8	53%	9
Total	38%	27	62%	44

It was also found that more men than women had worked

in their chosen fields. Of the twenty-eight women informants, only eight (twenty-nine per cent) said they had worked in their fields of study. In comparison, nineteen (forty-four per cent) of the male interviewees said they had done work in their fields of study. Sparling also found data to support the contention that fewer women than men have experience in their fields of study.*

extracurricular activities in field. The author questioned the interviewees about the extracurricular activities which they engaged in during high school and college. The writer was interested in discovering if the informants had participated in any activities which might serve to better acquaint them with their present occupational choices or which might aid in developing some personal qualities about themselves which might better equip them for the occupational fields which they were planning to enter. An example of such an activity is the student who intended to become a lawyer and who, during high school and college, was a member of the school debate team. One informant expressed this view quite well:

Question: What outside activities have you engaged in which might better acquaint you with your field?

Answer: Well, during high school I did belong to an art club and we arranged a few exhibits and such. And, I attended a few classes at the art institute at home

*Sparling, p. 79.

and visited the museums quite often. I have various books at home that I look through, and here on campus, I belong to the Art Club and we've opened up a little art gallery downtown here, and this I think is quite an advantage in helping to become more acquainted with my field.

The following table shows the percentage of interviewees who have and have not participated in such activities.

TABLE IV

STUDENTS WHO HAVE OR HAVE NOT PARTICIPATED IN ACTIVITIES CONNECTED TO FIELD OF INTEREST, BY GRADE OF INFORMANT

Grade	Activities Connected to Field		No Activities Connected to Field	
	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number
Senior	79%	12	21%	3
Junior	59%	10	41%	7
Sophomore	70%	13	30%	5
Freshman	35%	7	65%	14
Total	60%	42	40%	29

It was found that about the same percentage of men and women informants had participated in activities connected to their fields of study. Fifty-seven per cent (sixteen) of the women informants had participated in such activities, and sixty per cent (twenty-six) of the male informants had taken part in activities connected to their fields of study.

Discussion with professionals. The informants were asked if they had discussed their chosen occupations with

any persons professionally connected to their chosen fields. It was assumed that such discussion would better acquaint the student with the demands, requirements, and rewards of that occupation and thus aid in rendering his ultimate occupational choice more realistic. The table which follows contains the interviewees' responses to this question.

TABLE V

DISCUSSION OR NO DISCUSSION WITH PROFESSIONALS IN FIELD
OF INTEREST, BY GRADE OF INFORMANT

Grade	Discussion with Professionals		No Discussion with Professionals	
	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number
Senior	100%	15	--	--
Junior	88%	15	12%	2
Sophomore	65%	12	35%	6
Freshman	70%	15	30%	6
Total	79%	57	21%	14

A considerably larger percentage of the male students had had discussion with professionals in their fields of interest. Only sixty-one per cent (seventeen) of the women informants said they had had discussion with professionals in their fields of study. In contrast, ninety-three per cent (forty) of the male interviewees said they had had such discussion.

Reading material. Because it was assumed by the author that reading material in one's field would serve as an indirect means of better acquainting students with their chosen fields, each informant was asked what material in his field he had read. Although it is acknowledged that simply having read a great deal of material in one's field is not sufficient to gain comprehensive knowledge of one's chosen field, reading such material is one manner by which a student might gain further knowledge and thereby become better acquainted with the opportunities, rewards, requirements, and disadvantages of employment in that occupation. The following table shows the responses of the interviewees to this question.

TABLE VI
AMOUNT OF READING IN FIELD OF INTEREST,
BY GRADE OF INFORMANT

Grade	Much Reading		Some Reading		No Reading	
	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number
Senior	36%	5	64%	10	--	--
Junior	29%	5	59%	10	12%	2
Sophomore	15%	3	60%	10	25%	5
Freshman	5%	1	50%	11	45%	9
Total	20%	14	58%	41	22%	16

It was also concluded that men read more in their fields than women. Twenty-six per cent (eleven) of the men

and eleven per cent (three) of the women said they had done considerable reading in their fields. Sixty per cent (twenty-six) of the men and fifty-three per cent (fifteen) of the women said they had done some reading in their fields. Fourteen per cent (six) of the men and thirty-six per cent (ten) of the women said they had done no extra reading in their fields. S. J. Sparling also found data to this effect.*

Branch of field. Each interviewee was asked what branch of his chosen field he intended to enter and why he had made this particular choice. It was assumed that the student who was better acquainted with his particular field of interest would similarly have a more comprehensive knowledge of the specialized branches available in that occupation and thus could objectively choose one of these. Those students who were unable to make such a choice usually told the author that they were not well enough acquainted with their fields to do so. One student expressed this quite well:

Question: In what branch of the field of sociology would you like to specialize?

Answer: I don't know. I haven't thought too much about it and I really don't know. I'm taking social welfare now and see the relationship there, and I thought about teaching, but I don't know.

*Sparling, p. 80.

The table which follows contains the informants' responses to this question. Judging from the responses of the informants, it appears that they expect to obtain positions with more financial and social status than in fact are available to them. It appears that the students' certainty of choice grows through the junior year, then sharply decreases in the senior year. After having made a choice of a specialized branch of their fields, in many cases the senior informants found that they were unable to secure, what they considered, satisfactory positions in these branches of their fields. Consequently, these seniors became more uncertain as to the suitability of their choices of specialized branches of their fields. On the other hand, the freshman, sophomore, and junior informants, for the most part, had not yet attempted to secure permanent positions in their fields. As a result, they were not fully informed as to the possibilities of securing, what they considered, suitable positions in these fields. Consequently, more juniors than seniors said they were certain which branch of their field they expected to enter.

TABLE VII

STUDENTS WHO HAVE AND HAVE NOT MADE CHOICES OF SPECIALIZED BRANCHES OF THEIR FIELDS, BY GRADE OF INFORMANT

Grade	Have Made a Choice Per Cent	Number	Have Not Made a Choice Per Cent	Number
senior	43%	6	57%	9
Junior	53%	9	47%	8
Sophomore	45%	8	55%	10
Freshman	40%	8	60%	13
Total	44%	31	56%	40

Plans after graduation. The writer asked each informant what he planned to do after graduation from college. Some students replied that they intended to go to graduate school, some knew which company or organization for which they wished to work, and others answered that they had no post-graduation plans as they were not well enough acquainted with their chosen fields to make any such decisions. One student expressed this response of those who had no post-graduation plans:

Question: What are your tentative or certain plans as to what you will do after graduation from college?

Answer: Work, I suppose. But I don't have any idea of where I'd like to work or who I'd like to work for.

The following table reports the interviewees' responses

when questioned about their career plans after graduation from college.

TABLE VIII
STUDENTS WHO HAVE AND HAVE NOT MADE POST-GRADUATION
PLANS, BY GRADE OF INFORMANT

Grade	Have Post-Graduation Plans		Not Well Enough Acquainted With Occupational Opportunities to Make Post-Graduation Plans	
	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number
Senior	93%	14	7%	1
Junior	76%	13	24%	4
Sophomore	47%	8	53%	10
Freshman	30%	6	70%	15
Total	59%	41	41%	30

Some students were able to tell the author just how they would go about getting a job in their field and what problems they might encounter in obtaining the position they desired. Other students said their knowledge of their chosen field was not comprehensive enough to enable them to predict exactly what problems they might encounter in securing the position they desired, while others answered that they really did not know how they would go about getting a job in their field as they were not well enough acquainted with the procedure or had not as yet given this

aspect of their career any serious thought. These two questions, "How would you go about getting a job in your chosen field?" and "What problems do you anticipate in securing a position in your chosen field?", were asked of each interviewee in order to evaluate these aspects of their acquaintance with their chosen fields. One student very straightforwardly expressed the view of those who did not know how to go about getting a job in their fields:

Question: How would you go about getting a job in your particular field?

Answer: I don't know how. I really don't know how you get jobs.

Still another student expressed some degree of acquaintance with his field when asked what problems he might encounter in attempting to secure a position in that field, but when questioned further, confessed he did not know:

Question: What problems do you anticipate in securing a position in your field?

Answer: None. I believe there is a great demand for people in these fields, but not on the B.A. level.

Question: Would you intend to secure a degree higher than a B.A.?

Answer: Yes, definitely.

Question: Do you think you would have any trouble in getting admitted to a graduate school?

Answer: Gee, I really don't know.

The following tables show the students' responses to these questions.

TABLE IX

STUDENTS WHO ARE AWARE AND ARE NOT AWARE OF OCCUPATIONAL PROBLEMS, BY GRADE OF INFORMANT

Grade	Aware of Occupational Problems		Not Well Enough Acquainted with Field of Study to Anticipate Occupational Problems	
	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number
Senior	67%	10	33%	5
Junior	53%	9	47%	8
Sophomore	47%	8	53%	10
Freshman	25%	5	75%	16
Total	46%	32	54%	39

As is shown, of the freshmen students, seventy-five per cent said they were not well enough acquainted with their chosen fields to anticipate what occupational problems they might have. In contrast, only thirty-three per cent of the senior informants responded in this manner. A total of sixty-four per cent of the underclass students expressed ignorance concerning occupational problems they might encounter, whereas, only forty per cent of the upperclass students expressed such ignorance. Because the upperclass students appeared to be better acquainted than the underclass informants with the occupational problems they might encounter in their chosen fields, it was therefore concluded that, in this respect, the former had been

more realistic in their choices of major fields of study.

TABLE X

STUDENTS WHO HAVE A PLAN OF ENTRY OR WHO HAVE NO PLAN OF ENTRY INTO CHOSEN OCCUPATION, BY GRADE OF INFORMANT

Grade	Have a Plan of Entry		No Plan of Entry	
	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number
Senior	93%	14	7%	1
Junior	53%	9	47%	8
Sophomore	37%	7	63%	11
Freshmen	30%	6	70%	15
Total	51%	36	49%	35

When asked if they had developed a plan of entry into their chosen fields, approximately sixty-seven per cent of the underclass students said they had no such plan. In contrast, only twenty-seven per cent of the upperclass students responded in this manner. As is seen in the above table, only seven per cent of the senior interviewees said they had no plan of entry into their chosen fields, but seventy per cent of the freshmen students responded similarly. However, it must be admitted that it is possible that this response is not completely indicative of the higher realism of the senior students. On the contrary, it is possible that because these informants were seniors and,

in most cases, would be working full time the following year, they therefore had to develop some plan of entry into their chosen fields. In contrast, the freshmen students, for the most part, would not be permanently employed on a full time basis until they graduated from college. Therefore, the freshmen students did not find it necessary to immediately develop a plan of entry into their chosen fields. However, further study of this aspect of occupational choices is necessary to determine the process by which students develop plans of entry into their chosen fields.

It was also concluded that more men than women made plans of entry into their chosen fields. Sixty-three per cent (twenty-seven) of the men and thirty-two per cent (nine) of the women had made definite plans by which they would attempt to secure positions in their chosen fields. Sparling also concluded that more men than women make plans of entry into their chosen fields.*

Sex. It was found that the female interviewees thought differently about their careers than the male informants. Of the twenty-eight women informants, twenty-one (seventy-five per cent) said they were not planning on having permanent careers in their chosen fields of study. On the contrary, they had chosen a field of study merely in

*Sparling, p. 81.

order to have some means of earning a living should something happen to their future husbands. Each of these informants regarded her future role as wife or mother as more important than a role as a career woman.

The majority of the female informants chose the teaching profession as a future possible career. L. J. Sparling also found data to this effect.² Eighteen (sixty-four per cent) of the women informants said they were preparing themselves for the teaching profession, three (eleven per cent) were studying secretarial science, three were studying sociology, one, nursing, one, anthropology, one, social welfare, and one had not yet made a definite decision as to which profession she might eventually enter. In contrast, the male informants had chosen a wide variety of fields of study.³

For the following reasons it was concluded that the women informants, for the most part, were not as realistic in their choices of fields of study as the men: (1) Fewer women than men had had experience in their fields of study. Seventy-one per cent (twenty) of the women had had no work experience in their chosen fields. In comparison, fifty-six per cent (twenty-four) of the males had had no such work experience.⁴ (2) A considerably larger percentage of

²Ibid., p. 73

³See p. 11.

⁴See pp. 31-32.

the male students had had discussion with professionals in their fields of interest. Only sixty-one per cent (seventeen) of the women informants said they had had discussion with professionals in their fields of study. In contrast, ninety-three per cent (forty) of the male interviewees said they had had such discussion.⁵ (3) The male informants had done more extra reading in their fields than the women. Twenty-six per cent (eleven) of the men and eleven per cent (three) of the women said they had done considerable extra reading in their fields. Sixty per cent (twenty-six) of the men and fifty-three per cent (fifteen) of the women said they had done some such reading in their fields. Fourteen per cent (six) of the men and thirty-six per cent (ten) of the women said they had done no extra reading in their fields.⁶ (4) Finally, more men than women made plans of entry into their chosen fields. Sixty-three per cent (twenty-seven) of the men and thirty-two per cent (nine) of the women had made definite plans by which they would attempt to secure positions in their chosen fields.⁷

II. KEY INFLUENCES

Oftentimes a young person will choose a major field of study or an occupation simply because he has been

⁵See p. 34.

⁶See pp. 35-36.

⁷See p. 43.

influenced by some person already in this field, because his parents want him to enter this occupation and, in some cases, merely because his friends have chosen this occupation or major field of study. Probably there are students who became interested in an occupation because of a positive influence by some particular individual but who also objectively evaluated their personal qualifications for that occupation before making a definite decision to prepare themselves for entrance into that field. Admittedly such choices cannot be regarded as unrealistic merely because the student was originally influenced by some individual in that occupation. However, it is proposed that only those students who entered occupations without objectively evaluating their own abilities and the requirements of that occupation, have made unrealistic occupational choices. In such cases, they have made a particular occupational choice merely because they were favorably influenced by some key person or persons.

Family members. Each interviewee was asked if he had been influenced by any member of his family in his choice of an occupation or major field of study. In addition, each informant was asked if any member of his family had been or was now engaged in the occupation which he intended to enter. In cases in which the respondent answered that his occupational choice or major field of

study was primarily determined by family influences, the author did not on this criterion alone conclude that the student had made an unrealistic choice of an occupation or major field of study. On the contrary, influence by family members was only one factor utilized in determining the realism of a student's occupational choice. Only those students who, due to family influence, made choices of major fields of study for which they were not in some manner suited were considered as having made unrealistic choices.

In some cases, it was found that students were expected to eventually enter their fathers' professions. Occasionally family pressure on the student to do so caused him to make an occupational choice which was incompatible with his interests, abilities, and occupational desires; such occupational choices were termed unrealistic.

III. INTEREST

Interest is one of the most important factors in making a realistic choice of an occupation. In most cases, one is primarily motivated to enter one occupation rather than another because he is more interested in that occupation which he has chosen. This reason for choosing a particular occupation was given time and again by the informants.

The students interviewed gave various reasons for

the interests which they had in numerous occupations. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to develop an adequate theory of the psychology of career decisions. The purpose of this study is to note those factors which the interviewees claimed were significant influences in their choices of major fields of study or occupations. There will be no attempt to answer why a given student becomes interested in a particular occupation or why other students develop interests in other occupations. Such questions must be left to other researchers more versed in the psychology and sociology of career decisions.

Ability. Many students explained that they had become interested in their chosen field because: "I was better in it than in anything else."⁸ Each interviewee was asked what special qualifications he thought he had which would suit him particularly for the field he had chosen. Some students replied that they were not well enough acquainted with their chosen fields to enable them to evaluate the particular personal skills required for satisfactory performance of on-the-job duties. However, other

⁸It may be argued that lack of interest in all occupations except that occupation which one has chosen, is not per se an indication of interest in one's chosen field. however, it is not the author's purpose to measure the degree of interest which a student has in his chosen field; such tools of measurement are not available. Admittedly this is a subjective evaluation; the point is, the students said they had become interested in their chosen occupations because they had more ability in such fields.

students replied that they believed they did have some special abilities which would suit them more adequately for the occupations which they had chosen. An example of such a case was the student who had chosen to be a physical education instructor and who was quite adept in most athletics, enjoyed working with young athletes, and believed that such work would be personally rewarding to him.

Ability may also be measured in terms of college or high school grades. However, some students expressed a desire to enter an occupation or major field of study in which their grades were below average. An example of such a case was the student who wished to become an engineer, but who had considerable difficulty passing the required math courses. The student in question subsequently changed his major to another field of study after realizing that he could more advantageously utilize his abilities in another field.

Reading material. A student's interest in his particular field is reflected in most cases in the amount of extra reading (reading beyond course requirements) which he does in his field of interest. It was discovered that students who expressed an intense interest in their chosen fields also said that they had done considerable additional (that is, in addition to school assignments) reading in connection with their chosen field. It is this writer's

contention that such students are better equipped to make realistic occupational choices because they are more interested in one field than in any other, as evidenced through their reading, and because they are better acquainted with this one field than are those students who have not done comparable reading.

IV. FINANCIAL FACTORS

Some students attending college must support themselves in addition to performing the normal duties of a college student. For some, this demands that they earn enough money each quarter to fully support themselves while attending college. Many students quit school for a few quarters in order to find full time employment, save money, and return to school under less financial strain. Usually those students who are supported fully by their parents are under less financial and, in some cases, subsequent emotional pressure during their college years.

The amount of money which a student will be able to earn in any chosen profession probably is a significant factor for some in their ultimate choice of a major field of study or occupation. Just how important financial remuneration was for these informants will be seen in subsequent sections of this paper.*

*See pp. 88-93.

Money problems. Each interviewee was asked if at any time during the course of his formal schooling financial matters could become a difficulty for him. Admittedly, the informants could not be expected to predict the occurrence of any unforeseen events which might cause financial problems for them. However, the purpose of this question was only to discover if the informant was knowingly facing, or likely to face, any serious financial problems which, in the extreme, could interfere with his college education and/or his future career plans. An example of such a case was the student who desired to become a doctor. This student was faced with severe financial problems as he was self-supporting and admitted that his grades were suffering because he did not have enough time to prepare adequately for his courses. Eventually the student changed his major to another field of study, realizing that his occupational choice had been unrealistic in view of his financial problems and average abilities.

There were twelve informants who had such severe financial problems that they were working full time in addition to going to school. These students were taking between five and ten credits each quarter and consequently did not plan on graduating from college in less than five years. This appeared to be one means of handling one's financial problems and at the same time pursuing one's occupational desires. One student expressed this view quite freely:

Question: Are you currently working?

Answer: Yes, I work at Treasure State Equipment now. I started there in July and I worked full time and I went to school all summer and I was going on the money I made. At the time it was ten hours a day all through summer and so then when I started out here this fall, they cut me down to half a day and I go one to five and then I work on Saturdays.

Question: Then financial matters are a problem for you while you are going to school?

Answer: Well, I don't like to think they are. I feel very pleased now. At the time I was out of a job, it was quite a strain on me mentally. I'm not used to depending, I live with another girl. She just recently bought this house, and she helped me and then I have friends that send me a little bit of money. My folks haven't helped me. My father isn't living and so the financial side of it, the first quarter I was out here I was really under a strain financially because I didn't, I'm used to having an income.

Question: Will financial matters interfere with your graduation from college?

Answer: No, I don't think so because I'm not going to let them. I mean, if I have to wash dishes, I'm going to get through. But the job that I have now, they promised me, in fact they didn't want to hire me because I was going to school. They wanted someone that they felt would be there and I told them that it would surely be five years and maybe even six. But I feel that I can make it through in five.

Question: What per cent of your own support do you supply?

Answer: All of it. I feel that I put a lot more into it because when I pay the money here, why I really put everything that I have into it.

In order to obtain more information regarding the financial standing of the informants, they were all asked if they were currently employed and what, if any, percentage of their own support they supplied.

The author discovered that approximately one half of the interviewees, with the exception of the seniors, were having financial problems. Some seniors interviewed replied that they had had financial problems in previous years, but were now so near graduating that they no longer considered financial matters important enough to interfere with their college education. One senior student expressed this view:

Question: At any time during the course of your formal schooling could financial matters become a difficulty for you?

Answer: Yes. Not now though. But they have been. I'm too close to the end now.

This information accounts for the relatively small percentage (fourteen per cent) of seniors having financial problems as seen in the following table.

TABLE XI

STUDENTS WHO HAVE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS OR WHO HAVE NO FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, BY GRADE OF INFORMANT

Grade	Problems		No Problems	
	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number
Senior	14%	3	86%	12
Junior	59%	10	41%	7
Sophomore	50%	9	50%	9
Freshman	45%	9	55%	12
Total	44%	31	56%	40

It was also found that more men than women said they had financial problems. Fifty-six per cent (twenty-four) of the men and twenty-five per cent (seven) of the women said they had financial problems. Sparling also found data to this effect.*

Salary. Some students said that their particular choice of an occupation was made primarily because of the generous salary and high social status which accompanied employment in such a position.⁹ However, other interviewees said they would have made the same occupational choice regardless of financial remuneration. Undoubtedly, the amount of money which a student can objectively expect to earn in his chosen occupation influences some students to choose one occupation rather than another. One student said that he thought he would like to be a lawyer because of the high social status attributed to such persons and the more than adequate income possible in such a field. But when questioned about his acquaintance with the law profession, he admitted that he knew very little about this field. In such a case, where the student has chosen an occupation

*Sparling, p. 76.

⁹See Jean Lewis Jacoby, The Relationship of Occupational Prestige of Academic Fields to Selection of College Major, (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Montana State University: Missoula, Montana, 1957) for a discussion of college students' selection of careers with occupational prestige.

merely because of the generous salary and high social status attributed to that profession and without having any knowledge of the demands, rewards, requirements, and opportunities in that profession, this writer regards the occupational choice or choice of a major field of study as unrealistic.

Each interviewee was asked how much money he could expect to earn the first, second, and fifth years in his chosen profession. Those students who expressed an intense interest in earning much money, but who had no knowledge of, or incorrect information about how much money they could expect to earn the first, second, and fifth years in their chosen fields, were considered, in this sense, unrealistic in their choices of major fields of study or future occupations. One freshman student expressed this lack of realism:

Question: What factor has been most influential in your choice of a major field of study?

Answer: If I like it and if I can do it well. But naturally money has been pretty important.

Question: How much money would you expect to earn the first year in the field of psychology?

Answer: I guess the money is pretty good. But I imagine, well I don't know that much about it yet, so I really couldn't say.

V. REACTION OF PARENTS

A few of the interviewees expressed apprehensions about their parents' reactions to their choices of major fields of study or future occupations. When asked how

their parents had reacted to their choices of major fields of study, however, most of the students replied that their parents allowed them to freely make an occupational choice and in no manner attempted to influence them in that choice. But, in those few cases in which the informants answered that their parents were attempting to influence them to enter a particular field of study, the author observed one of the following consequences:

(1) When the student himself desired to enter the same occupation which his parents wished him to enter, the student seemed to be more interested in and certain that his choice of an occupation was one in which he would be satisfied.

(2) When the student desired to enter a field other than that field which his parents wanted him to enter, the student was doubtful that his choice of an occupation was one in which he would be completely satisfied.

It is proposed that in cases in which the student feels uncertain that he will be satisfied with the occupational choice which he has made, in this respect he has made an unrealistic choice of an occupation. Further elaboration and interpretation of this observation will be presented in a subsequent section of this paper.*

*See pp. 72-75.

CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS AND INFLUENCE ON OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES

When choosing an occupation one must ask oneself:
"What kind of person am I?" "What are my abilities and
interests?" "In what position can I make most use of them?"
Donald E. Super says:

Tracing the process of making a vocational choice
and adjusting to an occupation is, essentially, describ-
ing two processes--that of developing a picture of the
kind of person one is, and that of trying to make that
concept a reality.¹

From childhood on, a person begins to develop this self-
concept, but some individuals are able to make this concept
explicit at an earlier age than others. Making an occupa-
tional choice is only one means of making this self-concept
explicit, but this paper will deal only with the process of
occupational decision making. Because not every individual
has developed an image of what kind of a person he wants to
be at a given age, not every person is able to make an occu-
pational choice at a given point in time. Choosing an occu-
pation requires that one choose to attempt to become "this
kind of a person" rather than "that kind of a person." Some

¹Donald E. Super, "Vocational Adjustment: Implement-
ing a Self-Concept," Occupations (November, 1951), Volume
30, p. 89.

students are unable to make permanent occupational choices during their college years because they have not developed concepts of "what kinds of persons they want to be." In this connection Super says: "In choosing an occupation one is, in effect, choosing a means of implementing a self-concept."²

I. BACKGROUND

The "kind of person one wants to be" depends a great deal upon one's background. What are the occupations of the students' parents? Have the students been influenced in their occupational choices by their parents' occupations? How much education have one's parents had? What effect, if any, does one's parent's education have upon one's future occupational choice? Is the student under any financial strain? When did the student make his occupational choice? What kind of college grades does the student receive?* The above questions were asked of each interviewee in an effort to determine what significance, if any, these background factors may have on their choices of major fields of study or future occupations.³ Their responses will be presented in the following pages.

²Super, p. 92.

*Freshman students were asked what kind of grades they received in high school.

³See Interview guide in appendix.

Early choices. It is important to know when the student made the particular occupational choice he has made. Eli Ginzberg points out that early choices are more stable than recent occupational choices.⁴ The student who has chosen a particular occupation at an early age and who has taken courses over an extended period of time in preparation for entrance into that occupation is less likely to change his occupational choice than is that student who only recently made his particular occupational choice. Even if the student should become dissatisfied with his occupational choice, he is less likely to change occupations after spending considerable time, money, and energy preparing himself for a particular position, than is the student who has not had such expenditures.

The author found that among her interviewees there were very few who had made a permanent occupational choice at a young age. Most of the informants had made numerous occupational choices before choosing their present fields of study. However, those informants who had made their present occupational choices at a young age told this writer that they were certain that they would be satisfied with the choice they had made and that they were not likely to change major fields of study. One student expressed this view quite well:

⁴Ginzberg, pp. 27-28.

Question: Why have you chosen nursing as a possible future career?

Answer: Well, ever since I was little I've always, I just, my mother's a nurse for one thing. I don't think that really has an awful lot to do with it. She never pushed me or anything. It's just that, I don't know, I've always been interested in it very much.

Question: Did you ever consider going into some other field?

Answer: Well yes, but there's always money involved. I mean doctors and vets, there's a lot of school, eight years.

Question: Did you ever consider going into a field that was not connected to medicine in some way?

Answer: No, not that I remember.

Question: Are you likely to change your choice of a major field of study?

Answer: No, definitely not. If things turn out the way I hope they will, I'll be very satisfied with nursing.

This information is presented in the following table; it will also be seen that almost one half of the informants did not believe that they would be more than moderately satisfied with their chosen occupations. Judging from the responses of the informants, it was concluded that this lack of satisfaction with their chosen fields of study occurred primarily because the students felt unsure as to whether or not they would actually be working in occupations with which they would be satisfied. They clearly felt the absence of on-the-job experience. One senior student majoring in sociology said:

Question: How satisfied do you think you will be with the occupational choice you have made?

Answer: I would say, well here again it's really, that's a hard question to answer until actually you've had some experience in the field. But I think I would like it quite well. I wouldn't say I'd be extremely satisfied, that's a little silly to say at this time.

TABLE XII

STUDENTS WHO HAVE MADE EARLY OR RECENT OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES, DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH THEIR CHOICES, AND WHETHER OR NOT THEY WILL CHANGE OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES

	How Satisfied						Will Change Occupation					
	Very % No.		Moder- ately % No.		Not at all % No.		Yes % No.		No % No.		Do Not Know % No.	
Early choice	11% 8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	11% 8	--	--	--
Recent choice	20% 14	49% 35	20% 14				25% 18	40% 28	24% 17			
Total	31% 22	49% 35	20% 14				25% 18	51% 36	24% 17			

College grades. In discussing academic grades L. J.

Sparling says:

Those who come to college with some definite aim, giving the question of a life career and of their fitness therefore serious consideration, and who kept their aims in mind, made definitely superior scholastic records. Those on the other hand who have no such purpose made distinctly lower records.⁵

⁵Sparling, p. 89.

It was found that there was some relation between the student's grades in college and/or high school and his interest in and satisfaction with his particular occupational choice. From the information obtained from the informants, it is debatable whether the students became satisfied with their choices of major fields of study because they received above average grades in their fields, or whether the students received above average grades in their particular fields because they were more interested in those fields and thus more satisfied with their choices. However the author found that those students who had a "B" average or better in college and/or high school expressed a high degree of interest in and satisfaction with their chosen fields more often than did those students who received lower grades.

Judging by the varied responses of the informants, it was concluded that there is a mutually dependent relation between academic grades and satisfaction with and interest in one's chosen profession. It will also be seen in the following table* that those students who said they were never more than moderately interested in or satisfied with their chosen fields of study also received below average grades (maintained less than a "C" average) in college (high school for freshmen).⁶ L. J. Sparling's research

*See p. 63.

⁶However, it must be admitted that these informants merely said they were never more than moderately interested

also corroborates this hypothesis.⁷

TABLE XIII

CORRELATION* BETWEEN ACADEMIC GRADES, INTEREST IN OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE, AND SATISFACTION WITH OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE

	Interested in Occupation						Satisfied With Choice					
	Very %	No.	Moder- ately %	No.	Not at all %	No.	Very %	No.	Moder- ately %	No.	Not at all %	No.
Above aver- age grades	13%	9	5%	4	1%	1	13%	9	5%	4	1%	1
Average grades	27%	19	37%	26	7%	5	19%	13	41%	29	11%	8
Below aver- age grades	--	--	7%	5	3%	2	--	--	3%	2	7%	5
Total	40%	28	49%	35	11%	8	32%	22	49%	35	19%	14

*The word "correlation" is not here employed as a statistical term, but rather, as a term meaning "a close or mutual relation." See Webster's New World Dictionary, New York: The World Publishing Company, 1960, p. 332.

Parents' education. One of the factors which A. J. Sparling employs in his study as a measure of realism is the degree to which the educational background of the student's parents coincides with the educational level required

in their chosen fields of study. It is possible that this was just an excuse for being poor students.

⁷Sparling, p. 89.

for entrance into the student's chosen occupation. Sparling found that those students who had family backgrounds favorable to advanced education were more successful, as measured by grades, in college than those students who had educationally unfavorable backgrounds. However, the present author's findings do not support Sparling's contention.⁸ On the contrary, the author found that a large proportion of her informants who had educationally unfavorable backgrounds had so far received above average grades in college. The author also found that many of the students had completed or expected to complete more schooling than their parents had completed.⁹

However, these conclusions may be open to error; since the informants were college students it may be argued that these results are not typical of other young persons. It is by no means proposed that the answers of the informants represent a uniform response of all young persons. On the contrary, it is possible that if high school students were interviewed the researcher would find results similar to those of Sparling's research. There is the possibility that the majority of high school students with unfavorable educational backgrounds do not enter college and thus, that only those exceptional students who had gone on to college

⁸See Table XIV on pp. 65-67.

⁹See Table XIV^b on p. 66.

despite educationally unfavorable backgrounds were interviewed. However, since only college students were interviewed, it is beyond the scope of this research paper to comment further upon the validity of the above propositions. It must therefore remain for further researchers to elaborate on this theory.

TABLE XIV^a

CORRELATION* BETWEEN PARENTS' EDUCATION AND STUDENTS' GRADE AVERAGES

Parents' Education	Students' Grade Averages						
	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-
Graduate work	1	2	1	3	-	2	-
B.A. Degree	-	2	2	-	8	2	2
Some College	1	1	1	4	2	4	-
High School Diploma	-	4	1	2	9	2	3
Some High School	-	-	-	1	3	-	1
Grade School Diploma	-	1	-	-	2	1	-
Some Grade School	-	-	-	1	1	1	-
Total	2	10	5	11	25	12	6

*See p. 65.

TABLE XIV^b

CORRELATION* BETWEEN PARENTS' EDUCATION AND STUDENTS' YEAR IN COLLEGE

Parents' Education	Students' Year in College			
	1	2	3	4
Graduate Work	4		2	3
B.A. Degree	4	3	6	3
Some College	3	5	4	1
High School Diploma	5	7	3	6
Some High School	1	2	1	1
Grade School Diploma	2		1	1
Some Grade School	2	1		
Total	21	18	17	15

*See p. 63.

TABLE XIV^c

CORRELATION* BETWEEN PARENTS' EDUCATION AND EDUCATION STUDENTS EXPECT TO COMPLETE

Parents' Education	Education Students Expect to Complete					
	2 yrs.	3 yrs.	B.A.	M.A.	LL.B.	Ph.D.
Graduate Work			5	2	2	
B.A. Degree			10	1	3	2
Some College	2		7	3	1	
High School Diploma			13	1		2
Some High School			3	2		
Grade School Diploma			3	1		
Some Grade School			3			
Total	2	--	49	10	6	4

*See p. 63.

Money problems. As has been stated previously,¹⁰ financial factors play an important role in the student's choice of a major field of study or future occupation. Since lack of financial support during one's college years may cause a student to choose one field of study rather than another, it is significant that finances play an integral role in the manner in which the student chooses to implement his self-concept. The following is only one example of a student who, after developing a concept of himself and choosing an occupation to implement that self-concept, was forced by lack of finances to choose another occupation or field of study and develop a new self-concept accordingly.

Question: What was your major when you were going to school in Wyoming?

Answer: Pre-med.

Question: Why did you choose this field?

Answer: Well, I had this, I don't know why, I would imagine that it was a childish dream, you know, being the great humanitarian and taking nothing in return, and I came to college and I was rudely awakened; in the first place, I had too many extracurricular activities and I found out that financially just anybody doesn't go through medical school; I mean I just couldn't make it financially, and I think that was the first realization; and then perhaps as I progressed further into the year, I really got to wondering if it was really worth it; I mean if I would really be happy and satisfied in that particular field, if I would be a good doctor or not, and I thought that I wouldn't, so therefore I thought there's no use continuing in the medical profession.

¹⁰See pp. 50-55.

Parent's occupation. According to previous researchers,¹¹ students pay little attention to their father's occupations when making an occupational choice. However, it was found that most of the informants had chosen careers which ranked higher socially and intellectually than their fathers'. These students said they had paid attention to their fathers' occupations and had consequently chosen careers which ranked higher socially and intellectually than their fathers'. Sparling also notes this difference: "There is a wide social gap between vocations chosen by students and vocations engaged in by their fathers."¹²

It was found that more than one half of the informants said they had been influenced, either positively or negatively, by their fathers' occupations. One student expressed this quite candidly:

Question: Has your father's choice of an occupation influenced you in any manner in your occupational choice?

Answer: Well, yes it did, but in a way, not that you would think. My father is from North Dakota and he only got through the eighth grade. He had to take over and work at home on a farm and he didn't have a chance for an education, so he went to barber school and he's making just enough money, and this has shown me definitely how valuable an education is.

Question: Have your parents tried to influence you in your choice of an occupation?

Answer: Well, I've always been on my own, to make my own decisions and do whatever I felt was best, but my mother did pressure me to get a job that paid well,

¹¹See p. 22.

¹²Sparling, p. 25.

because she knows how it is; she's had to go to work because my father doesn't make enough and even with both of them working, we don't really have enough; and I can see her point, that she would want me to get a job that paid well.

TABLE XV

PARENTS' OCCUPATIONS WHICH HAVE OR HAVE NOT INFLUENCED STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES, BY GRADE OF INFORMANT

Grade	Parent's Occupation Influenced Choice		Parent's Occupation Has Not Influenced Choice	
	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number
Senior	73%	11	27%	4
Junior	41%	7	59%	10
Sophomore	72%	13	28%	5
Freshman	52%	11	48%	10
Total	59%	42	41%	29

II. CONFLICT

In the process of making an ultimate choice of a major field of study or occupation, the student is sometimes thwarted in his attempt to choose an occupation which is compatible with his self-concept. A vagueness in response on the part of some interviewees served as an indication that the student had, as yet, been unable to make an occupational choice. For example, when asked what branch of his field the student wished to enter, some students vaguely

replied that they really could not say at this point because they really were not sure what fields they would eventually enter. Sometimes an unfavorable parental reaction toward the student's present occupational choice causes conflict between the student's desire to enter a certain field and the student's loyalty to and confidence in his parent's judgment. Such conflict causes the student to delay making an occupational choice and could, in the extreme, cause him to make a choice with which he would be dissatisfied. One student who appeared to have made an occupational choice with which she was dissatisfied had this to say:

Question: Have any particular individuals influenced you in your choice of a future occupation?

Answer: Well, in education, my parents made it all but a, they actually forced me into it. I mean, they gave me a choice. It was either college with education, or I put myself through. I'm sure I could have talked them out of it, but I didn't want to. I have too much respect for my parents.

Question: If you had not gone into the teaching profession, how would your parents have reacted?

Answer: They would have been upset. I know they would have gotten over it and they would have consented. I could have gotten out of it. But after I got into the field, hating it as I do, I realized their wisdom and actually I could see it at the time, but I just hated education courses. But I'm sure I could have gotten out of it if I'd really wanted to.

In any case, the student's progress towards making his occupational identity a reality is retarded when occupational conflicts arise.

Vagueness in response. Assuming that the student

has understood the question, a vagueness in his response indicates that he is undecided about his answer.* Such indecision may be caused by any number of factors among which this writer was able to discover the following:

(1) the student had not yet chosen a major field of study and therefore had no definite career plans; (2) the student had not yet chosen a special branch of his field and thus had made no definite career plans; (3) the student was not well enough acquainted with his field to make any definite career plans; (4) the student had not seriously considered even making an occupational choice; (5) the student made an occupational choice but had since discarded it for some reason, and had not been able to make another choice. Among those students who were characteristically vague in their responses to the writer's questions, it was concluded that such vagueness occurred for one of the above reasons.

Parental reaction to choice. The reaction of the student's parents to his choice of a major field of study has a significant influence on his ultimate choice of an occupation. This writer found that those students who had chosen fields of study to which their parents objected, or to which their parents voiced no opinion, were more likely to change their fields of study than were those students

*Of course it is always possible that the informant did not want to answer the question for personal reasons, and was therefore undecided about his answer even though such indecision was not related to his occupational decisions.

who had parental approval of their chosen fields of study.*

The informants gave two reasons why their parents did not support their chosen fields of study: (1) The parents wanted the student to enter his father's profession. Consequently, when the student chose another field of study, the parents tried to persuade him to enter the field in which his father was engaged. (2) The parents did not think that the student had chosen a field with which he would be satisfied. In their estimation of the student's abilities and aspirations, he was not suited for the field which he had chosen. They, therefore, attempted to dissuade him from entering that profession.

TABLE XVI

PARENTS' ATTITUDES WHICH HAVE OR HAVE NOT INFLUENCED
STUDENTS TO CHANGE OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES,
BY GRADE OF INFORMANT

Parents' Attitudes	Influence on Students' Choices			
	Will Not Change		Likely to Change	
	Per Cent	Major Number	Per Cent	Major Number
Approved	51%	36	3%	2
Disapproved	3%	2	18%	13
Did Not Care	8%	6	17%	12
Total	62%	44	38%	27

*See Table XVI on p. 73.

In cases in which the student lacks parental support for his chosen field of study, the student encounters a conflict between his desire to make his own occupational decisions unhampered by parental wishes, and his confidence in the judgment of his parents. The following is an example of such conflict.

Question: Why have you chosen physical education as a major field of study?

Answer: Well, I was real active in athletics in high school and in junior high, and I thought it'd be, I wanted to become a coach, so that's when I chose health and P.E.

Question: Did you ever consider going into some other field?

Answer: Yes, business administration.

Question: Why did you decide to major in P.E. rather than business administration?

Answer: Well, because I'd rather be a coach than go into business.

Question: What particular things about business administration appealed to you?

Answer: Well, probably the insurance, probably the selling of insurance because my father is in that field. See, I'm going to minor in business and if I don't finish up in P.E. that's what I'll go into--business; that's all I've been around. My father's always been selling insurance, so I'm just expected to go into his business; he didn't want me to major in P.E.

The above is a very good example of the following quote from Becker and Carper:

Analysis indicates that conflict does not necessarily occur in assuming an occupational identity. When

conflict does occur, it centers around disparities between parental and occupational expectations.¹³

Making occupational identity a reality. In the preceding sections the author pointed out a few examples in which students were unable to make their original occupational choices realities. Donald Super has pointed out that: "In choosing an occupation, one is, in effect, choosing a means of implementing a self-concept."¹⁴ When one has developed a concept of himself and chosen an occupation to implement this self-concept, he has still to make this occupational identity a reality. Occupational conflict arises when one is unable to make his occupational identity a reality. When one has chosen an occupation which he is unable to make a reality, he must reconstruct the picture he has of the kind of person he wants to be; only then will he be able to make another occupational choice and thereby implement his new self-concept. As will be seen in Chapter VI, for some students, developing a new occupational concept poses quite a problem.

¹³Becker and Carper, p. 53.

¹⁴Super, p. 92.

CHAPTER V

STUDENTS WHO HAVE MADE REALISTIC OR UNREALISTIC OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES

The process of choosing an occupation and then making that occupational concept a reality requires essentially that the student be aware of his own capabilities and the requirements of that occupation which he has chosen. A person may become aware of the particular demands of an occupation in many ways, some of which are: reading material connected to that occupation; discussing occupational requirements with persons employed in that field; working in one's chosen field. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the author found that those students who expressed dissatisfaction with their chosen fields of study were more likely to change their occupations to fit their values¹ than to change their values to fit their occupations.

Making one's occupational concept a reality depends greatly upon the degree to which one's aspiration level is compatible with one's probable actual level of achievement. As will be discussed later in this chapter, it was found that the majority of the underclass students had not yet made the distinction between their aspiration level and the

¹See pp. 7-8.

level which they could probably expect to achieve. One example of this is easily seen in the case of the student who chooses to major in a field in which his grades are extremely low. However, it was discovered that most upper-class students had made this distinction. The presentation and interpretation of these data will follow in another section of this chapter.

Based on the information obtained from the students interviewed, this author has drawn a conclusion similar to that of R. M. Stephenson to the effect that both upperclass and underclass students disregard career possibilities when making occupational choices.² One factor employed in attempting to determine the amount of thinking the student had done concerning the career possibilities available in his chosen field was: "Had the student developed a plan of entry into his chosen field?" It was found that a large number of students (forty-one per cent) had not even considered what they would do after graduation from college.³

Another factor employed in attempting to determine whether the student had made the distinction between his aspiration level and his probable actual level of achievement was financial remuneration. Had the student made the distinction between his aspired earnings and his probable actual earnings? Those students who expected to earn more

²See p. 22.

³See p. 39.

money than other persons just beginning in the same profession were actually earning, were regarded as having not yet made this distinction. Just how important the students said financial remuneration was for them will be discussed later in this chapter.

I. CAPABILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS OF OCCUPATION

Determining the requirements of one's chosen occupation obviously requires that one have some acquaintance with the field in which he plans to work. After determining those duties which one must perform in his chosen field, one must decide whether or not he has the ability to fulfill the demands of his chosen occupation. Working in one's chosen field, reading material in that field, and discussing one's chosen occupation with professionals in that field are all means by which a person may evaluate his suitability for a chosen occupation, and are therefore steps toward making an occupational concept a reality.

Working in one's field. The informants said that working in their chosen fields was one of the most adequate means of becoming acquainted with their fields and thereby evaluating their fitness for those particular occupations. Howes and Platte also found data to this effect:

In the opinions of the students, liking a particular subject, observing people working in the job, and actual working conditions were of much greater influence

than other factors; these are major factors which influence occupational choices.⁴

However, it must be admitted that, in some cases, a low-level job may not teach one much about his field. For example, correcting examination papers does not teach one much about the teaching profession. But, judging from the responses of the informants, it is concluded that, in most cases, working in one's field, even in a low-level position, offers one the opportunity to learn more about his field than he otherwise would. Granted, one may not learn about his field on-the-job in a low-level position, but he may learn by observing other professionals at work and through discussion with fellow workers. One junior majoring in chemistry expressed this view:

Question: What work have you done, either on a full time or a part time basis, which has contributed to your knowledge of your field?

Answer: I worked at Continental Oil Refinery in Denver as a tester in a lab. This is just minor work in chemistry, I mean you run distillations and things like that. But, it still acquaints me more with procedures in which they go about it. But other than that, I haven't done any more.

Question: Was this work an added incentive for you to go on in the field of chemistry?

Answer: Well, not this work because a moron could have done it. And the work they have you do, the same thing day in and day out for weeks on end. And so anybody can do it after a period of time, although a few

⁴V. Howes and D. Platte, "Choices They Make," Industrial Arts and Vocational Education, Volume 48 (November, 1959), p. 259.

can catch on faster. But, I've talked it (the field) over with chemists where I worked. They've got a few chemists there. I've talked to them about different advancements and thing like that. And this has been an added incentive for me.

Those students who had had some temporary or part time employment in their chosen fields told this writer that, through such on-the-job training, they were able to definitely determine whether or not they believed they had chosen a field in which they would be satisfied and, to their minds, successful. On the basis of such temporary employment, they consequently either changed their majors to another field in which they believed they would be more satisfied, or they continued on in their chosen field assured that they had made an occupational choice which they would not regret.

Discussion with professionals. Not all students have an opportunity to accept part time or temporary employment in their major fields of study. In view of this circumstance, such students must rely upon other means of becoming acquainted with their chosen occupations. One method employed by the interviewees was to gain acquaintance by discussion of one's occupation with professionals employed in one's chosen occupation. Although this method is necessarily abstract and therefore gives the student only a second hand view of the actual working conditions he will encounter on-the-job, it does give him a general

picture of what he may expect when he does accept a permanent position in his chosen field, and is thereby valuable to that extent.

Amount of reading. Another means of becoming better acquainted with one's chosen field of study is by reading material in one's field. Although the same objections may be raised against this means of acquainting oneself with one's field as were raised against discussion with professionals in one's chosen field, nevertheless, such a method is valuable in so far as it gives the student more information concerning his field than he would otherwise have. Also, as was stated in an earlier section of this paper, the amount of reading which the student has done in his chosen field is an indication of his interest in that field.*

Changing occupations to fit values. It was found that those students who expressed dissatisfaction with their chosen occupations were more likely to change their occupational choices to fit their values than they were to change their values to fit their occupational choices. However, it must be admitted that those students who were interviewed merely said that they intended to change their choices of major fields of study; whether they actually did change majors cannot be determined by this study since this author

*See pp. 49-50.

conducted no follow up interviews. It must remain, therefore, for future researchers to determine the validity of this hypothesis. The following table shows the number of students who expressed dissatisfaction with their chosen fields of study and those who said they were planning to change majors.

TABLE XVII

CORRELATION* BETWEEN STUDENTS' DISSATISFACTION WITH FIELD OF STUDY AND STUDENTS' PLANS TO CHANGE FIELD OF STUDY, BY GRADE OF INFORMANT

Grade	Dissatisfied With Field of Study		Plans to Change Field of Study	
	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number
Senior	13%	2	13%	2
Junior	18%	3	18%	3
Sophomore	28%	5	28%	5
Freshman	43%	9	43%	9
Total	26%	19	26%	19

*See p. 63.

It is easily seen that every student who said he was dissatisfied with his major field of study also said he was planning to change majors. It will be noted that dissatisfaction with one's choice of a major field of study occurred more often among the underclass students. This phenomenon may have occurred because those persons who, as underclass

students, were dissatisfied with their chosen occupations, quit school before becoming upperclass students. However, it may have occurred because the upperclass students had been more realistic in their occupational choices than the underclass students, and thus there were fewer upperclass students who expressed dissatisfaction with their choices of major fields of study. Since many of the upperclass students said they had originally made occupational choices with which they were dissatisfied, but had now chosen a major field of study with which they were pleased, this writer concluded that this phenomenon was caused by a combination of the above factors.

II. ASPIRATION LEVEL AND PROBABLE ACTUAL LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT

In order to remain satisfied with one's choice of an occupation, one must achieve those occupational goals which one has set for oneself. Too often a student will set his goals unreasonably higher than he can realistically expect to attain. In such cases the student becomes dissatisfied with his occupational choice and, in most cases, will choose to change fields of study rather than lower his aspirations to a level more compatible with his probable actual level of achievement.

Underclass students. It was concluded that most of

the underclass students had not yet made the distinction between their aspiration level and their probable actual level of achievement. This conclusion was drawn because many underclass students were majoring in fields in which their grades were extremely low. In these cases it appeared unlikely that the students would even graduate from college in their present major fields of study, let alone secure acceptable positions in their chosen fields. Also it was found that many underclass students said they were interested in their chosen fields, but when asked how interested they were in courses which they were taking or had taken in their fields, expressed a lack of interest or only moderate interest in them. Such conflicting answers led to the conclusion that such students were not approaching their occupational choices realistically. Students expressing a lack of interest in their major courses frequently spoke of their high occupational aspirations. In view of their lack of interest in their major courses, it appeared unlikely that such students had made the distinction between their aspiration level and their probable actual level of achievement. One sophomore student expressed this view:

Question: How interested are you in your field of study?

Answer: I'm moderately interested in it. I mean, I'm interested in it more than anything else.

Question: How interested are you in the courses you have taken in your field?

Answer: Oh, they're alright. I'm moderately interested, I'd say.

Question: How satisfied do you think you will be with the occupational choice you have made?

Answer: I think I'll be real satisfied with it once I get out and work. I'm kind of tired of school now, but I think it will be OK when I'm working.

Question: Will you have any trouble securing a job in your field?

Answer: No, not at all. It's a very open field and I think I can advance just about as far as I want to, if I work hard enough.

Upperclass students. Judging from the responses of the upperclass students, it was concluded that the majority had made the distinction between their aspiration level and their probable actual level of achievement. These students, for the most part, were majoring in fields in which their grades were above average.* As has been stated earlier, good grades are not only an indication of one's ability in a chosen field, but also are an indication of one's interest in one's courses. The majority of these students also expressed a high degree of interest in those courses which they were taking or had already taken in their major fields of study. For these reasons, this author concluded that

*However, there were twelve students who had established "B" plus or better grade averages in all of their courses. These informants did well in all courses regardless of interest or major field of study. This group of students was an exception, and on the basis of their grades alone, it was not possible to conclude if they had made the distinction between their aspiration level and their probable actual level of achievement.

most of the upperclass students had correlated their interests and their abilities when selecting those occupations or major fields of study which they had chosen. One junior was particularly enthusiastic about her major:

Question: How interested are you in your field?

Answer: I'm very interested in my major. I would love to, say major specifically in Spanish and get some sort of a job in Mexico or in the State Department or something like this, as an interpreter or anything of this nature. But this wouldn't be sufficient, I mean if I had a family, a job like this would have to come first.

Question: How satisfied do you think you will be with your chosen profession?

Answer: Well, I liked practice teaching and I became very involved in it. I feel as if I will be very happy because I love being able to do things and to be doing something really constructive and helpful to someone. And I know since I enjoyed my practice teaching, I'll be happy.

Career possibilities and occupational choices. Many persons come to college for other than professional reasons. As a result, their particular choice of a major field of study is generally for non-professional reasons such as: "My friends were majoring in this field so I chose it too." "I chose this field because I heard it would be easier than any other major." "My brother majored in this field and he liked it, so I thought I would too." As a result, these students have disregarded future career possibilities when making their occupational choices.

R. M. Stephenson has pointed out that most students do disregard future career possibilities when making

occupational choices. He says:

The distribution of occupational choices has very little correspondence either to the national or local distribution of job opportunities or to the father's occupation.⁵

Each interviewee was asked if he believed there was a great demand for professionals in his particular field of study. A surprising number of students replied that they really had not thought about it, but that they supposed there was a great demand! Also each student was asked what he planned to do after graduation from college. The majority of the underclass students, particularly the freshmen, replied that they supposed they would go to work like everyone else! However, the upperclass students, particularly the seniors, had already begun formulating career plans and, in some cases, had even secured permanent positions in their fields following graduation. But, those upperclass students who had recently changed majors were still uncertain as to their future career plans and had not as yet developed a plan of entry into their fields. The following table will show the relationship between early or recent choice of a major field of study and: (1) the student's plan of entry into his chosen occupation; (2) his post-graduation plans, if any.

⁵Stephenson, p. 485.

TABLE XVIII

INFORMANTS WHO HAVE OR HAVE NO PLAN OF ENTRY INTO THEIR CHOSEN FIELDS AND WHO HAVE OR HAVE NO POST-GRADUATION PLANS, BY EARLY OR RECENT CHOICE OF A MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY

	Have Plan of Entry		No Plan of Entry		Have Post-Grad- uation Plans		No Post-Grad- uation Plans	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Early choice	11%	8	--	--	11%	8	--	--
Recent choice	40%	28	49%	35	47%	33	42%	30
Total	51%	36	49%	35	58%	41	42%	30

It will be seen that every student who said he had made an early choice of a major field of study also said he had developed a plan of entry into his chosen field and had some post-graduation plans in mind. It will also be seen that forty-nine per cent (thirty-five) of the informants had developed no plan of entry into their fields, and forty-two per cent (thirty) had no post-graduation plans. It was therefore concluded that almost one half of these college students interviewed had, in this respect, disregarded their future career possibilities when making occupational choices.

Money. Another means employed to determine whether or not the students had made the distinction between aspiration level and probable actual level of achievement, was

financial remuneration. Each informant was asked how much money he expected to earn the first year in his chosen field. This figure was then compared to the amount of money persons working in that occupation the first year actually do earn.⁶ If the student quoted a figure considerably higher than one he could objectively expect to earn, it was concluded that the student had not, in this respect, made the distinction between his aspiration level and his probable actual level of achievement. As will be seen in the following table,* sixty-seven per cent (ten) of the senior informants expected to earn the same amount of money as other persons now working in their chosen fields. However, only twenty-one per cent of the junior, sophomore and freshman informants expected to earn this amount. Only thirteen per cent (two) of the seniors said they did not know how much money they could expect to earn in their chosen fields, but an average of fifty-four per cent of the junior, sophomore, and freshman students responded in this manner. It was therefore concluded that, for the most part, the senior informants had, in this respect, made the distinction between their aspiration level and their probable actual level of achievement. The junior, sophomore, and freshman

⁶ Each interviewee was also asked where he expected to work the first year in his field and allowances were made for the differences in salaries in different parts of the country.

*See p. 91.

informants, for the most part, were not well enough informed about the financial aspects of their chosen fields to enable the author to here draw a conclusion.

It was also found that, for the most part, the male informants said they expected to earn more money in their chosen fields than the women interviewees said they expected to earn. Twenty-one per cent (nine) of the men said they expected to earn more money than persons working in their fields actually were earning. None of the women responded in this manner. Twelve per cent (five) of the male informants and eleven per cent (three) of the women said they expected to earn less than other professionals in their fields. Twenty-five per cent (eleven) of the men and thirty-nine per cent (eleven) of the women said they expected to earn the same amount as others working in their fields actually were earning. Forty-two per cent (eighteen) of the men and fifty per cent (fourteen) of the women said they had no idea how much money they could expect to earn in their chosen fields. Sparling also concluded that men expect to earn more money than women expect to earn in their chosen fields.* It appeared that the majority of the women informants did not know how much money they might expect to earn in their chosen professions. However, of those women who quoted an expected salary, most (seventy-nine per cent)

*Sparling, p. 34.

TABLE XIX

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE AMOUNT OF MONEY WHICH INFORMANTS SAID THEY EXPECTED TO EARN IN THEIR FIELDS AND THE AMOUNT WHICH PERSONS IN THEIR FIELDS ACTUALLY DO EARN, BY GRADE OF INFORMANT

	Expect to Earn More Than Pro- fessionals in Their Fields		Expect to Earn Less Than Pro- fessionals in Their Fields		Expect to Earn Same as Profes- sionals in Their Fields		Do Not Know	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Senior	20%	3	--	--	67%	10	13%	2
Junior	--	--	12%	2	23%	4	65%	11
Sophomore	11%	2	17%	3	22%	4	50%	9
Freshman	19%	4	14%	3	19%	4	48%	10
Total	13%	9	11%	8	31%	22	45%	32

said they expected to earn approximately the same as other persons working in their fields actually were earning.

One might ask: "How important is financial remuneration for college students?" The majority of the students expressed a desire to earn an above average salary, but these students had not made their particular occupational choices only because they believed they could earn a great deal of money in that particular field. On the contrary, most of the informants said that financial remuneration, as a reason for choosing an occupation, was subordinate to the

primary factors of interest and ability in a particular field.

Those few students who placed greater emphasis on financial factors as a reason for choosing a particular field of study were questioned more intensely by the author about their knowledge of the amount of money they expected to earn in their chosen professions. Those students who displayed a lack of knowledge concerning financial remuneration in their field, but who, at the same time, said the financial factor was the most important reason they had chosen their particular field, were regarded as having been unrealistic in their occupational choices. Unrealistic choices, in this sense, were more common among the underclass students than among the juniors or seniors. One sophomore student displayed this lack of realism:

Question: How interested are you in your field of study?

Answer: Well, I really don't know yet. I haven't had anything to do with it yet.

Question: How satisfied do you think you will be with the occupational choice you have made?

Answer: I think I'll be real satisfied because there's prestige that goes with it, along with a lot of money.

Question: How much money would you expect to earn the first year in your chosen field?

Answer: I really don't know that much about it to say, but I know they make a lot of money.

The following chapter will give the reader an idea of just how difficult it is for some students who, after having

made one or more unrealistic occupational choices, attempt to make a realistic choice of an occupation.

CHAPTER VI

STUDENTS WITH NO OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE

Those informants who said they had come to college for non-professional reasons also said that they had given little or no thought to their future career plans and that when choosing a major field of study, had not seriously considered whether or not they wanted to work in that field following graduation. After further questioning, it was concluded that such students had, as yet, developed no relevant self-concept. In most cases they said they thought they would be happy working in any number of fields, and therefore, were not able to make any definite occupational choice. As Donald Super has pointed out, choosing an occupation is, in effect, choosing to be this kind of person rather than that kind of person.¹ Obviously, if one has been unable to develop such an aspired concept of himself, he will not be able to choose to be one kind of person rather than another.

E. J. Sparling has discussed the theory that occupational conflict causes one to delay making an occupational choice. Sparling says:

The great majority of students who had not chosen a vocation had been thwarted in their real desire: they

¹D. E. Super, "Vocational Adjustment: Implementing a Self-Concept," Occupations (November, 1951), Volume 30, p. 92.

chose a vocation once, but had been unable to realize it for one reason or another, and did not make another choice.²

Those informants who were thwarted in their original choices were also unable to make other occupational choices. This inability may have evolved when the person developed a narrow concept of the kind of person he wanted to become and thus, when thwarted in his original occupational desire, was unable to choose any other occupation which would fit his present occupational concept. In such cases, the individual must first reconstruct his picture of the kind of person he wants to become and then proceed to make another occupational choice compatible with this new occupational concept.³

Non-professional reasons. Sparling has pointed out that those students who came to college with a definite career in mind, made better scholastic records than did those students who had no such life career in mind. He says:

Those who come to college with some definite aim, giving the question of a life career and of their fitness therefore serious consideration, and who kept their aims in mind, made definitely superior scholastic records. Those on the other hand who have no such purpose made distinctly lower records.⁴

Data were found to corroborate this hypothesis. However,

²Sparling, p. 91.

³See pp. 96-105.

⁴Sparling, p. 89.

on the basis of information obtained from the informants, the above hypothesis was modified to this extent: Those students who were seriously considering their future career plans made distinctly higher scholastic records than those students who were not doing so. The fact that the student had or had not made a definite choice of a major field of study, was not found to be significantly related to his scholastic record.

Interviewees who had not yet made a choice of a major field of study had delayed making a choice for one of three reasons: (1) they had made a choice previously, but for various reasons had withdrawn from that field and had been unable to make another choice; (2) they had not thought about their future career plans enough to enable them to make a choice of a major field of study; (3) they had not yet developed an occupationally relevant self-concept.

No occupationally relevant self-concept. Self grows out of the social process; it is a product which develops as a child learns to use language so that he can act consistently towards others and his own organism (he does not yet have a self) and so he can learn to anticipate the behavior of others and fit his own behavior into the behavior others anticipate of him. This occurs through what George Herbert Mead calls taking and playing roles. Mead conceives of "role" as an individual's organization of activity to which he commits himself. He wants to fit his

activity into the norms and expectations in the structure of relationships. A role is a general orientation rather than a set prescription of behavior. A role is always there regardless of the individual. A role says what one may do, may not do, should do and should not do. A small child coming from infancy learns to observe his own behavior through others. He learns to take the role of the other. This means seeing his own behavior through the responsive behavior of the other. He imagines how the other takes his behavior into account and thus he formulates his own behavior. As the child learns to take and play roles, his self is starting to develop. He is beginning to learn to act consistently in a predictable way. He is incorporating his role as an aspect of his self. Self is built out of the roles we play in life. When "self-concept" is spoken of, it is in reference to a specific role the individual has incorporated into his being. In this paper, the author is talking about occupationally relevant self-concepts. In choosing an occupation, one chooses to attempt to become this kind of person rather than that kind of person, and in effect, to attempt to play this occupational role rather than that occupational role. The college student must begin to incorporate a certain expected role into his conception of who he thinks he is. The college student is expected to choose an occupation and prepare himself for said occupation while in college. Thus, while in college, he attempts to

play the role of the college student, who is moving toward an occupational role.

The self is seen in two aspects: as object and as subject of behavior. The self as object is called the "me" phase of self; the self as subject is called the "I" phase of self. Subjectively the self is spontaneous, uninhibited, and unpredictable. The "me" aspect of self (objective self) is conservative, normative, predictable and controllable. As in the case with any other object, the self is considered as a plan of action. Self-attitudes are tendencies to act toward the self or are a plan of action toward the self. A social act begins with some impulse which calls to mind a series of ways of expressing the impulse. All the things one thinks, feels, and does to express this impulse constitute the social act. The concept of self has to be taken into consideration in explaining behavior. One is attempting to answer two sets of demands: role-demands and self-demands. We want others to think we are the kind of person we think we are. The self is seen in two frameworks: it is a product of the interaction built out of the roles one plays in life; and it is a process which is the individual counterpart of the social process. When we examine the self-process, we find in a person a replication of the social process. When one thinks, he interacts with himself as he interacts with others. This involves internalizing the social process. It also involves the interaction of

the "I" and "me" phases of the self. One interprets the "I" through the "me" and decides how and when to express an impulse, if at all, in the framework of his roles, and also in the general concept of his self. The self-process involves: (1) perceiving others; (2) interpreting others; (3) perceiving one's own impulses; (4) interpreting one's own impulses; (5) an individuation of the social process. The self is built out of: roles which become self-concepts, and the self-process.⁵

Three examples will now be presented in an attempt to show how Mead's theory of self-concept is applicable to the responses of the informants.

Question: What particular branch of your field would you like to specialize in?

Answer: Well, at this point, I am in education for security's sake. I, because, I don't know why, but it is a basic thing in the minds of people now. You know, you have to be secure, and to go into teaching, that's the best way. I have my reservations about whether or not I'll teach. I think I might be interested in going into work in museums or such. This would involve a little more of my background in literature and history and such. I think teaching would be narrow in time. I think I would possibly find myself becoming bored with it to an extent. That is, if I didn't have outside interests, outside activities along with it.

Question: What are your tentative or certain plans as to what you will do after graduation from college?

Answer: Well, I do plan to go to graduate school, and I think I'd like to go to school back east, but of

⁵George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self and Society, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934.

course I can't predict, I'm not sure that this will all work out.

When asked the branch of his field in which he would like to specialize, the student in the above interview said that he was not yet certain, but that he was currently in education for security's sake. From this response, the author inferred that the respondent was playing the role of the student who is expected to choose some field of study and then proceed to prepare himself for entrance into that field after graduation from college. However, the student went on to say that he was not completely certain that education was the field in which he believed he would be most happy. He felt that he would be more satisfied with some occupation which offered him more variety. As he said: "I think teaching would be narrow in time. I think I would possibly find myself becoming bored with it to an extent." His conception of the demands of his possible role as a teacher was not entirely compatible with what he believed to be his self-demands. As Mead says: The concept of self has to be taken into consideration in explaining behavior. One is attempting to answer two sets of demands: role-demands and self-demands. When asked what he planned to do after graduation from college, this student again displayed some uncertainty. He said he was not certain that his plans for graduate school would work out. For these reasons, it was inferred that this student had not yet fully developed an occupationally relevant self-concept. He had not been able

to incorporate the role of the teacher into an aspect of himself. He still had his doubts about his suitability in the role of a teacher. As he said: "I have my reservations about whether or not I'll teach."

The following is an example from another interview:

Question: With what persons, other than the one you have already mentioned, have you discussed your choice of art as a major field of study?

Answer: I've only discussed my field with other art students at this point. I haven't talked to any of the teachers in the field, because at this point I am not sure as to what to talk about. I don't know that much about it.

Question: Are you still in the process of making a final occupational choice?

Answer: Well, I know my broad interests, but not a specialized branch. And, I don't have a desire to make a definite choice at this point. I know I'm criticized for this, but I don't feel that I could make a choice at this point. (Because of lack of knowledge?) I feel that I have so much to learn before making a choice, and I'm a very changeable person, and I want to be very sure before I do make a choice.

This student said she knew her broad interests, but was not yet ready to make a final choice of a specialized branch of her field. She appeared to feel that she did not know enough about the field of art to definitely determine if she would be satisfied playing an occupational role in a specialized branch of that field. She said: ". . . I'm a very changeable person" Apparently, she believed that her knowledge of her self-demands was not yet comprehensive enough to enable her to choose an occupational role which she would be able to incorporate into an aspect of

herself. She also appeared to lack a knowledge of the demands of an occupational role in any specialized branch of the field of art. Consequently, she responded that she was not yet ready to make a definite choice of an occupation. She said: "I don't have a desire to make a definite choice at this point. I know I'm criticized for this, but I don't feel that I could make a choice at this point." She was playing the role of the college student who is expected to make some choice of an occupation while in college. She had not been able to make this choice, and thus believed that she was criticized for this. Mead says: When "self-concept" is spoken of, it is in reference to a specific role the individual has incorporated into his being. This respondent apparently had developed a concept of herself as a student in college, but had not yet been able to develop an occupationally relevant self-concept.

The following is an example of a student who, after having made a choice of a major field of study with which he became dissatisfied, later chose another field of study with which he felt he would be happy.

Question: When you decided to enter college, had you already made a choice of a major field of study?

Answer: No, I decided to, well, I mean I felt, of course you always feel that the decision is fairly permanent. You don't feel that it's unstable or it isn't really a decision at all. And, so I felt that the decision to go to school and study forestry, because I like outdoor work, was pretty permanent. But, this has changed face about two times, but it's very stable and permanent now.

Question: Do you think that at that time you really didn't know what you were getting into?

Answer: Oh yes. You don't know anything about it until later.

Question: What made you decide that forestry was not the field for you?

Answer: I, my preconceived approach was the aesthetic values. But, of course, they teach and emphasize about ninety per cent commercial, and they only talk in terms of the aesthetic values in so far as the public is interested in it, and not you as a professional. Your concern must be with the overall commercial aspect of it.

Question: Are you now a zoology major?

Answer: Zoology to the end.

Question: In what branch of your field would you like to specialize?

Answer: Field research, instead of lab work.

Question: Are you likely to change your choice of a major field of study?

Answer: Oh, no. But, I'll go back for a minute and say that, why I'm interested in the out-of-doors rather than some other thing. Well, from the time I was born until the time I was seven years old, I was raised in a city, St. Louis, and it was then, well actually I was raised in a city until I was eighteen, so that wouldn't have too much of an influence, except for the fact that my father always liked to go hunting and fishing and driving through the country and so I always went with him. And, I have nothing against society at large, but the population of two to eight million doesn't scare me, but at the same time, I'm, I guess there's a psychological factor there too, that I don't understand about myself. But I enjoy the open spaces and what have you a lot better than big cities. But I, like I say, I have nothing against either one. I like both in their own place. But I've always gone when I was younger, I always traveled in the country and gone hunting and fishing with my father, and so I probably learned to like it through his interest.

This student apparently made his choice of a major field of

study primarily because he was extremely interested in the out-of-doors. However, after deciding to major in forestry, he discovered that his conception of the occupational role which he would be required to play in the field of forestry was not compatible with his self-demands. He wanted to play an occupational role which offered an emphasis on aesthetic values. He said: "My preconceived approach was the aesthetic values. But, of course, they teach and emphasize about ninety per cent commercial, and they only talk in terms of the aesthetic values in so far as the public is interested in it, and not you as a professional."

Consequently, this student changed his major to zoology and decided to specialize in field research rather than laboratory work. He apparently felt that his self-demands would be satisfied in an occupational role which offered an appreciation of aesthetic values and also an opportunity to work out-of-doors. He therefore chose to prepare himself for a career in zoological field work, feeling that an occupational role of this nature could be incorporated into his self-concept. The student goes on to explain why his interest in out-of-door work was so important to him and why he believed this was a significant aspect of his self-concept.

In describing the process of developing an occupationally relevant self-concept, Donald Super says that one develops a picture of numerous little aspects of oneself

which eventually one is able to develop into a complete self-concept. For this reason, when attempting to choose an occupation, and in effect, implement one's self-concept, those persons who are still in the process of developing a self-concept, are unable to choose between a number of fields because the numerous little aspects they have of themselves are compatible with several occupations.

Eli Ginzberg has pointed out that in choosing an occupation, one must make a compromise among his interests, abilities, aspirations, and desires.⁵ One should choose that occupation which best fits his abilities, interests, aspirations and desires. Naturally, no occupation is such that it will satisfy all of the young practitioner's occupational desires. For this reason, the college student must try to choose that field which he believes best suits the occupational role he wishes to play and in consequence, give up hope of fulfilling any minor desires or wishes he might have. This is the realistic compromise which all persons must make. In choosing a major field of study or future occupation, through a process of trial and error, the student attempts to find out if that job or field of study permits him to play the kind of role he wants to play. Secondly, he seeks to discover if the role the job or field of study requires him to play is one which he is

⁵Ginzberg, p. 193.

able to play--is he really able to live up to the concept he has of the kind of person he wants to become? If not, he should reconstruct the concept he has of the kind of person he wants to become and attempt to choose an occupation compatible with his new occupational concept.

Conflict causes delayed choice. Numerous instances were found in which the informant, because of occupational conflict, had discarded his original choice of a major field of study and had been unable to make another occupational choice. Those persons interviewed gave the following reasons for having discarded their original occupational choices: (1) their parents objected strongly to the choice they had made; (2) they found that they were more interested in some other field; (3) they did not have the ability to successfully complete the requirements for entrance into that occupation; (4) they lacked requisite funds to prepare for entrance into that occupation. In all cases except the second, the informants had delayed making other occupational choices. Such delay occurred in most cases because the student had limited himself to such a narrow range of occupational choices that when he was thwarted in his original choice, he was not able to make another choice acceptable to himself.

It was found that there were very few juniors and seniors who had not made a choice of a major field of

study* and that, for the most part, these students intended to work in those fields in which they were majoring. Thus, it appeared from their responses that they were seriously considering the future career possibilities in their particular fields of study. However, among the underclass students there was a large percentage who had not yet made a definite choice of a major field of study. Most of these students said they had originally made an occupational choice but had subsequently discarded it and had thereafter been unable to make another choice. On the basis of this information and data presented earlier in this paper, the author concluded that occupational conflict occurs most commonly among the underclass students, and that during their college years, most students progress from unrealistic to realistic occupational choices.

*It must be noted that Montana State University requires all students to make some choice of a major field of study by their junior year.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Increasing specialization of job requirements concomitant with longer and more intensive training programs has made it necessary for the young adult to make an occupational choice at an early age. Many young persons enter college without first considering for which occupation they wish to prepare themselves during their college years. As a consequence, the initial college years are spent trying to learn enough about the various occupations to enable the student to make an occupational choice with which he believes he will be satisfied.

During their college years, most students proceed from an unrealistic to a realistic occupational choice. Most students do not begin to develop an occupationally relevant self-concept until their college years. However, for some students, this self-concept is completed at a younger age. In choosing a particular occupation one is choosing to attempt to become "this kind of person" rather than "that kind of person." Therefore, some students choose occupations and thereby attempt to implement their occupationally relevant self-concepts at earlier ages than students who have been slower developing pictures of the "kind of person they want to become."

Summary and conclusions. It was found that the majority of the underclass informants did not choose their occupations realistically. Such students made occupational choices without being very well acquainted with those fields which they had chosen. Those criteria employed as an indication of the student's acquaintance with his chosen field were: (1) Had the student done any part time, temporary or permanent work in his chosen field? It was assumed that working in a particular occupation gives the individual an opportunity to evaluate his own ability in the field, the demands, requirements and rewards involved in such work, and consequently determine his fitness or suitability for a life long career in that particular occupation. It was found that forty-eight per cent of the upperclass students had worked in their chosen professions, and only thirty-two per cent of the underclass students had done such work. (2) Had the student participated in any extracurricular activities connected to his chosen field of study? An example of such an activity was the case of the student who intended to become a lawyer and who during college and high school participated in the school debate team. It was assumed that participation in such activities helps to develop personal qualities or traits which will be useful to the individual when he begins working in his chosen occupation. Also, such activities serve as an indication to the student of those skills which he will have to master as

a professional in his chosen field; if he dislikes working in activities connected to his field, this may serve as an indication to him that he will dislike working professionally in that field. Sixty-nine per cent of the upperclass students had participated in extracurricular activities connected to their fields of study, whereas only fifty-two per cent of the underclass students had taken part in such activities. (3) Had the student discussed his choice of an occupation with persons professionally connected to his chosen field? It was assumed that such discussion would better acquaint the student with the demands, requirements, and rewards of his chosen occupation; on the basis of such discussion, the student would be able to develop a general picture of the field he had chosen and thereby be in a better position to determine the suitability of his particular occupational choice. The author found that ninety-four per cent of the upperclass students had discussed their occupational choices with professionals in their field, but only sixty-seven per cent of the underclass students had had such discussion. (4) Had the student done any outside reading of material in his chosen field? It was assumed that such reading would better acquaint the student with his chosen field. Admittedly, reading material in one's field gives one only a second hand or abstract view of his chosen field, but it does give the individual more information about his field than he would otherwise have, and

therefore serves as a means of becoming acquainted with one's field. Thirty-two per cent of the juniors and seniors had done considerable extra reading in their fields, whereas only ten per cent of the freshmen and sophomores had done such extracurricular reading. (5) Had the student decided upon what branch of his field he wanted to enter? It was assumed that a decision to enter one branch of one's field rather than another indicated that the student was well enough acquainted with his field to enable him to determine which branch of his field he wished to enter, and also, that it was an indication that the student had done considerably more thinking about his future career plans than had those students who had not yet decided which branch of their fields they wished to enter. Forty-eight per cent of the upperclass students had made a choice of a specialized branch of their fields, but only forty-two per cent of the underclass students had made such a choice. (6) Had the student developed a plan of entry into his chosen occupation? It was assumed that those students who had a plan of entry were better acquainted with their chosen fields than were those students who had not yet developed such a plan. Having developed a plan of entry into one's chosen field was an indication that the student was well enough acquainted with his field to predict the most satisfactory manner through which he would be able to acquire a suitable position in his chosen field. Those students who had no

such plan of entry said they were not well enough acquainted with their fields to enable them to develop such a plan. Seventy-three per cent of the juniors and seniors had developed a plan of entry into their chosen fields, but only thirty-three per cent of the sophomores and freshmen had developed such plans. (7) Had the student made any post-graduation plans? It was assumed that one must be acquainted with one's chosen field in order to make definite career plans in his field following graduation. Those students who had no such post-graduation plans said they were not well enough acquainted with their fields to make any definite career plans following graduation. Eighty-four per cent of the upperclass students had made post-graduation plans, in comparison to only thirty-eight per cent of the underclass students who had made such plans. (8) Was the student aware of what particular problems he might encounter in attempting to secure a position in his particular field? It was assumed that those students who were well acquainted with their chosen fields would be more able to accurately predict what occupational problems they might encounter in seeking positions in their chosen fields than would be those students who had no such acquaintance with their occupations. It was found that sixty per cent of the upperclass students were aware of the occupational problems they could expect to encounter in attempting to secure positions in their chosen fields, whereas only thirty-six per cent of the

underclass students expressed an awareness of such problems. On the basis of this information, the author concluded that the upperclass students, being better acquainted with their particular occupational choices, were in better positions to make more realistic choices of occupations than were the underclass students. Furthermore, the underclass students, being not very well acquainted with their chosen occupations, had not objectively considered their suitability for professional work in their chosen fields, and had, in effect, made unrealistic occupational choices.*

Interest in one's chosen field was given as the primary reason why the informants made the occupational choices which they did make. Since one's ability in a particular profession is one of the main criteria of success, the author attempted to evaluate each student's ability in his particular field of interest. Since the author had no other objective means of measuring the student's ability in his chosen profession, college grades (high school grades for freshmen) were employed in this study. However, it must also be taken into consideration that one's grades could reflect one's relationship with the professor, one's interest in one's field, or the student's attitude toward

*Of course there are always exceptions to the rule; in fact, this writer did interview underclass students who had made realistic occupational choices and upperclass students who had made unrealistic occupational choices. However, in this case the author is drawing a conclusion about the majority of the upperclass and underclass students interviewed.

the subject matter of the particular courses. In this sense then, grades are not a completely adequate indication of one's ability in a particular field; but, lacking any other objective means of determining the students' abilities in their fields, grades were used in this research. The author found that the correlation between interest and ability in one's occupation was higher among the upperclass students than among the underclass informants. Of those underclass students interviewed, their grade average in their particular major fields averaged out as 2.2 or a "C" plus grade average; in comparison, the grade average of the upperclass informants in their major fields was 2.8, or a "B" minus grade average. Thus, it appeared that the juniors and seniors interviewed had established a higher grade average in their major fields than the sophomore or freshman interviewees. However, this difference may have occurred because only those students who received higher grades remained in school long enough to become upperclassmen, and that those students who received poor grades as underclassmen, subsequently quit school. Since this writer interviewed only those students who were currently attending school, the validity of the above hypotheses must remain for subsequent researchers to determine.

The author found that those interviewees who had made early occupational choices were less likely to change them than were those informants who only recently (within

the past four years) made a choice of a major field of study or future occupation. There were only eight informants, or eleven per cent of the total interviewees, who had made early occupational choices, and among these eight, all said they were certain they would not change their occupational choices. However, among the remaining sixty-three interviewees who said they had recently made a choice of a major field of study, only twenty-eight, or forty-four per cent, said they were certain they would remain in their present fields. On this basis, the author concluded that early choices of an occupation are more stable than recent occupational choices.

When asked why they had come to college, the majority of the underclass students gave reasons other than professional. Only thirty-seven per cent of the underclass informants said they had come to college in order to prepare themselves for their chosen professions. This group of interviewees was composed of those students who had made a definite choice of a major field of study or who said they thought they knew which occupation they wanted to enter after graduation from college. The sixty-three per cent who came to college for such reasons as: "I didn't want to go to work," "My parents wanted me to go to college," or "I had some friends who came to college here, so I decided to come too," was composed of those students who did not intend to complete college, had not chosen a major

field of study, or/and who did not intend to work professionally in that field in which they were majoring. Therefore, this writer concluded that a large proportion of underclass students (sixty-three per cent) had not yet chosen a permanent occupation and in such cases, had come to college for reasons other than professional or occupational.

In attempting to determine whether or not the informants had considered their future career possibilities when making their occupational choices, each informant was asked what his plans were after graduation from college, what problems he could expect to encounter in attempting to secure a position in his field following graduation, and how he would go about getting a job in his particular field. It was found that: (1) Forty-one per cent of the total interviewees said they were not well enough acquainted with their particular fields to make any post-graduation plans; (2) fifty-four per cent of the informants said they were not well enough acquainted with their chosen fields to predict what problems they might expect to encounter in securing a position in their chosen fields; (3) forty-nine per cent of the students interviewed said they had not even seriously thought about how they would go about getting a job in their particular fields. On the basis of this information, the author concluded that about one half of the students usually disregarded their future career possibilities

when making occupational choices.

Two factors employed as a measure of realism of one's occupational choice were interest in one's chosen field and satisfaction with one's occupational choice. The author found that those students with above average grades ("B" average or better) were more interested in and satisfied with their choices than those students with below average grades (lower than a "C" average). Of the fourteen interviewees with above average grades, sixty-four per cent said they were very satisfied with and interested in the occupational choices they had made; in effect, they said they were certain they would not change their choices of major fields of study or future occupations. In comparison, of the seven informants with below average grades, not one said he was very interested in or satisfied with his particular choice, five were moderately interested, two were not at all interested, two were moderately satisfied, and five said they were not at all satisfied. Therefore, it was concluded that those students who received high college grades made more realistic occupational choices than those students who received poor grades in college.

Of the seventy-one students interviewed, fifty had chosen professions which required more education than their fathers' and which also ranked higher socially than the occupations in which their fathers were engaged. In comparison, sixteen of the total interviewees had chosen

occupations which were intellectually and socially on the same level as their fathers' occupations, and only five informants chose occupations which ranked lower socially and intellectually than their fathers'. Consequently, this writer concluded that, on the average, a student chooses a career which ranks higher socially and intellectually than his father's occupation. It was also found¹ that there was no correlation between either the parents' education and the students' grade average or between the parents' education and the students' year in college.

What influence do the student's parents have on his choice of an occupation? In some cases it was found that the parents' occupations influenced the students' occupational choices, but in other cases the students said that they were not influenced by their parents' occupations. The author found that fifty-nine per cent of the total informants said that they had been influenced, either positively or negatively, in their occupational choices by their parents' occupations.² One may ask why some students and not others are so influenced. However, because the author's purpose was merely to set forth those factors which were influential in the students' choices of major fields of study, answering such a question is beyond the scope of this research paper and must therefore remain for subsequent

¹See pp. 65-66.

²See pp. 69-70.

researchers to determine.

What influence does the parent's attitude toward the student's occupational choice have on this choice? This writer found that of thirty-eight cases in which the parents approved of the student's occupational choice, only two students said they were likely to change their choice of a major field of study. However, of thirty-three cases in which the parents did not care or disapproved of the student's occupational choice, twenty-five students said they were likely to change major fields of study. Therefore, this writer concluded that those students who had chosen fields of study to which their parents objected, or to which their parents voiced no opinion, made less stable occupational choices than those students who had parental approval of their chosen fields of study.

When in the process of making an occupational choice, the student attempts to choose a field of study which is compatible with his values. Such values may include: the opportunity the job offers for training and advancement, the financial remuneration available in that field, the working conditions, the educational and vocational demands of that occupation, its intellectual requirements, the necessity of special abilities in that field, and its demands on one's temperament and character. When the students had chosen occupations which they later found were incompatible with their particular values, the writer found

that those students were more likely to change their occupational choices to fit their values than they were to change their values to fit their occupational choices. This conclusion was drawn on the basis of the following information: Of thirty-five students who said they were only moderately satisfied with their particular choices of major fields of study, twenty-one said they were considering changing fields of study. Of fourteen students who said they were dissatisfied with their choices of major fields of study, all of them said they were definitely going to change major fields of study.

Each interviewee was asked: "In what way can the University help you in solving any vocational problems you might have?" Over one half (fifty-three per cent) of the informants replied that they could not think of any way in which the University could help them to solve their occupational problems. However, fifteen per cent said that the University could help them through its Counseling Center. Another fifteen per cent answered that the University could help them, through its Placement Center, to find a job after graduation. Three per cent of the total informants said that the University could help them by sponsoring a loan. Since the University performs all these functions, it appears that the vocational needs of the students are being met. However, fourteen per cent of the total interviewees said that the University could help them in solving

their vocational problems by offering some type of on-the-job training in the various fields so that during their years as underclassmen, they could become better acquainted with their chosen fields of study. Such a program would give them first hand knowledge of their fields and thereby enable them to make a more realistic choice of an occupation. In view of the large number of students who had not yet worked in their chosen fields (sixty-one per cent), the possibility of offering on-the-job training programs for underclass students is one worth considering. There are many reasons why such a program has not been developed, however the scope of this paper does not permit the author to here discuss this topic.

As has been stated previously, the researchers generally agree that high school students are, on the whole, unrealistic in their approach to career planning. However, the conclusions drawn by the researchers concerning the realism of college students' occupational choices are contradictory. Some studies indicate that college students are generally realistic in their choice of occupations, whereas, other studies support the opposite conclusion. The author's research data suggest that there is a transition from the unrealistic approach to the realistic approach, and furthermore, that this transition occurs for some students during the college years. Since a few students progress more rapidly than others in this developmental process,

the author proposes that this is the basic reason why conclusions drawn in previous studies of college students' occupational choices have not been in agreement with one another.

Limitations of the study. In this study the informants' grades were used as an indication of their general intelligence and of their abilities in particular fields of study. However this use of grades is not a completely adequate indication of either the student's general intelligence or his ability in particular fields of study because a student's grades could also reflect his relationship with the professor, his interest in a field of study, or his attitude toward the subject matter of the particular courses. But, lacking any other means of evaluating the students' abilities or general intelligence, it was consequently decided that grades must be utilized.³

In all, seventy-one college students were interviewed. As in all research of this nature, the conclusions drawn are merely approximations stated in terms of probability. It is by no means contended that the results of this study or the conclusions drawn are universally true of all college students. On the contrary, it is merely proposed that if one were to conduct another survey of college students, employing the same methodology and using the same

³See pp. 15-16.

research techniques, the results would probably coincide with those of this research project.⁴

Because only college students were interviewed, this study is limited in so far as the conclusions drawn cannot be said to apply to those persons who do not attend college. The interviewees were a biased sample because they were all college students and thus cannot represent persons who do not attend college. This is particularly true in regard to the question of the students' educational backgrounds.⁵ It has been found by previous researchers that those students who had family backgrounds favorable to advanced education were more successful, as measured by grades, in college than those students who had educationally unfavorable backgrounds. However, the findings of this research project did not support this contention. On the contrary, it was found that there was no noticeable relationship between the students' grades or year in college, and the students' parents' education or occupations. But, it may be contended that those students who come from educationally unfavorable backgrounds usually do not attend college and thus, that in this study only those few exceptional students who come to college despite educationally unfavorable backgrounds were interviewed. Because this research was concerned only with college students, it can provide no data either in support

⁴See pp. 23-29.

⁵See pp. 63-66.

or refutation of the above hypotheses.

This study is limited because no follow-up interviews were conducted. Therefore, the findings of this study are based merely on what the informants said they planned to do. Whether or not the students actually did what they said they were planning to do cannot be determined from this study.⁶ For this reason, the results of this research are more highly probable than they would have been had follow-up interviews been conducted and the validity of the informants responses more accurately determined.

It was found that the juniors and seniors interviewed had established higher grade averages in their major fields of study than the sophomore or freshman interviewees. It is possible that this was so because the upperclassmen had made more realistic choices of major fields of study. However, it is also possible that this difference may have been caused because those students who received higher college grades remained in school and became upperclassmen, whereas those students who received poor grades as underclassmen subsequently quit school before becoming juniors or seniors.⁷ Had both high school and college students been interviewed and also follow-up interviews of these students conducted, the probability of either of these hypotheses could have been reduced.

⁶See pp. 81-82.

⁷See pp. 113-114.

Suggestions for further research. Because this study is limited in the preceding respects, it is suggested that subsequent researchers might concern themselves with the following questions: (1) Do these factors which the informants said influenced their occupational choices appear universally among other college students asked the same questions? The results of this study are only approximations stated in terms of probability. Other researchers might see if other college students express the same sentiments.⁸ (2) How do the responses of these college students differ from those of persons who do not attend college? (3) Why does a given student become interested in a particular occupation and other students develop interests in other occupations? (4) Did these informants actually do what they said they were planning to do? Follow-up interviews of these same informants would reveal the degree of reliability of their responses. (5) What is the relationship, if any, between the students' parents' occupations or education and the students' grades or year in college? The findings of this study could be deceiving because only college students were interviewed.⁹ (6) The juniors and seniors interviewed had established a higher grade average in their major fields than the sophomore or freshman interviewees. This difference may have occurred because the upperclassmen

⁸See pp. 28-29.

⁹See pp. 65-66.

had made more realistic choices of major fields of study than the underclassmen. On the other hand, this difference may have occurred because those students who received higher grades remained in college whereas, those who received poor grades dropped out of school their first two years. A study of both high school and college students, with follow up interviews, might provide data to support either of these hypotheses.¹⁰ (7) Why are some students and not others influenced by their parents' occupations? (8) What are the advantages, disadvantages, and possibilities of offering on-the-job training programs for college students?

¹⁰ See pp. 113-114.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Name; age; class (year in school); address (Missoula address); telephone; nationality; race; religion.
2. For what reason(s) did you decide to come to college? (Occupationally oriented reasons would indicate that the student has given considerable thought to his career and has taken definite steps in fulfilling his career plans; superfluous reasons, such as "Nothing else to do" would indicate that the student has not seriously considered his future career.)
3. Why did you choose Montana State University? (Note considerations of finances, influence of "others" on his choice of school, considerations of career, such as "Has an excellent journalism school.")
4. What is your field of study or your tentative field of study? (In conjunction with the following question in regard to grades, this question is useful in determining the students' intellectual ability in his chosen field.)
5. What is your best subject? What is your highest grade in this subject? What is your average grade? What is your next best subject? What is your highest grade in this subject? What is your average grade? What is your approximate over-all grade average? (Refer to question 4.)
6. Why have you chosen this particular field? (Note influence of others on choice; evaluation of special abilities in making occupational choice.)
7. When (at what age) did you decide on this particular area of study? (Recently made choices are considered as yet untried; probe as to initial reasons for making choice.)
8. Are you likely to change your occupational choice? What changes will you make? Why? (Note student's realization that his aspiration level, as seen through his present choice of major, and his probable actual level of achievement do or do not coincide.)
9. Have you changed your choice of occupation recently? What change did you make? Why did you make this change? (Same reason as above question.)

10. In which particular branch of your field do you wish to specialize? Why have you chosen this branch? (Choice of a specialized branch, and knowledge of such branch indicates that the student is well acquainted with his chosen field.)
11. What are your tentative or certain plans as to what you will do when you graduate? For what reason(s) have you made these particular career plans? (Formulation of career plans indicates that student has seriously considered future entry into chosen occupation and has some knowledge of future occupation.)
12. What is your father's occupation? In what way has his choice of occupation influenced you in your choice of an occupation? (When student makes occupational choice under the influence of "another," without seriously considering his own abilities, talents, etc., the student has not made a "realistic" choice.)
13. What technical (or other) material in your field have you read which has better acquainted you with your chosen occupation? (It is assumed that acquaintance with one's chosen field better prepares one for the problems and difficulties which he will encounter in his chosen occupation; also indicates interest in one's field and future career.)
14. With what persons professionally connected with your field have you discussed your occupational choice? (It is assumed that discussion of one's occupational choice with someone professionally connected to the field will give the student a better knowledge of his field and the career possibilities available therein and thus render his ultimate occupational choice more "realistic.")
15. What outside activities have you participated in during high school or college which will help you in your chosen field? (In some occupations, social skills, special talents, etc. which have been developed through participation in outside activities better prepares the student for his future career.)
16. What work have you done, either on a full time or a part time basis, which has contributed to your knowledge of your field of study? (Such work better acquaints the student with his chosen field and thus, renders him more able, on the basis of experience, to "realistically" make a permanent occupational choice.)

17. How interested are you in your field of study? How interested are (were) you in those courses in your major field which you are now (were) taking? (Note degree of correlation between interest in courses offered in major field and interest in occupational choice; according to Bridges and Dollinger, interest is a basic criteria for "realistic" choice of an occupation.)
18. What problems do you anticipate in the successful completion of the university requirements for a degree in your major field? How do you plan to solve these problems? (A workable plan for solving any foreseen problems indicates that the student has thought "realistically" about the steps he must take to successfully realize his career aspirations, and thus, that his expected level of achievement coincides closely with his career aspirations.)
19. What major problems do you anticipate in securing a position after graduation from college? What will you do to solve these problems? (Same as in question 18; also indicates student's acquaintance with his occupational field.)
20. How great is the demand for people in your chosen field? Why do you think there is (isn't) a demand? (Indicates a knowledge of one's field; note any indication of student's evaluation of his possible chances for success in his chosen field.)
21. What special qualifications do you have which suit you particularly for the field you have chosen? (Such as education, special abilities, social skills, temperament, etc.) (Same as question 20.)
22. What is the highest grade in school completed by your father? By your mother? (Assumption is that students whose parents have a low level of formal education will not be as likely to complete college; therefore, a student whose occupational choice requires a college degree, but whose parents are not well educated has been "unrealistic" in his occupational choice.)
23. Where do you plan to work? How much money do you expect to earn the first year in your chosen profession? The second year? The fifth year? (Correlation between money the student expects to earn in his chosen occupation and the money actually earned by persons in his field for the same number of years indicates that the student has a "realistic" knowledge of this aspect of

his occupation and on this basis has made a "realistic" occupational choice.)

24. How (by what means) do you plan to obtain a job in your field? (A workable plan of entry into his chosen field indicates that the student has some "realistic" knowledge of his chosen field and is therefore aware of the obstacles which he will confront.)
25. Are you currently working? What percentage of your own support do you supply? (An occupational choice which requires extended formal training and thus more money, is considered "unrealistic" if the student has financial difficulties and must work his way through school.)
26. How have your parents reacted to your occupational decision? How has this reaction affected your decision? (Occupational conflict occurs in some cases when parents disagree with the student's occupational choice; when such conflict does occur, it indicates an "unrealistic" choice of an occupation.)
27. In what way have any particular individuals influenced you in making your occupational choice? (Such as parents, teachers, friends?) (Same as question 12.)
28. How satisfied do you think you will be with the occupational choice you have made? Why? (Satisfaction with one's occupational choice indicates a "realistic" choice; probe for student's evaluation of his reasons for satisfaction.)
29. In what way can the University help you in solving your vocational problems? (Probe any discussion which may aid in determining "realism" of student's occupational choice.)
30. Are there any other aspects of your occupational choice which you regard as important but which I have failed to inquire about? If so, what are they?

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name _____ 2. Age _____ 3. Class _____
4. Address _____ 5. Telephone _____
6. Nationality _____ 7. Race _____
8. Religion _____
9. What vocation do you expect to enter after leaving college? _____
10. At what age did you make this decision? _____
11. Have you decided on the particular branch of the vocation in which you expect to specialize? _____
What branch? _____
12. Have you done summer work, or part time work, which has increased your knowledge of the vocation you have selected? _____
What work? _____
13. What steps do you intend to take (after completing all your training) to get properly located in your vocation? _____

14. How much money (per year) do you expect to earn in your vocation?
First year _____
Second year _____
Fifth year _____
15. What books and magazine articles have you read about the vocation you have chosen (technical books, biographies, etc.)? _____

16. Have you been influenced in making your choice of vocation by anyone in particular? _____ What is his (her) relationship? _____ Which of his arguments influenced you in your decision? _____

17. What are your reasons for choosing your vocation? _____

18. Do you have a summer position? _____ What is it? _____

19. Do you want a summer position? _____ What kind of a position? _____

20. If you do not intend to work, how are you going to spend your vacation? _____

21. What positions have you held?
Position Nature of Work Liked Disliked

22. What are your greatest accomplishments (other than athletic) outside of class work (presidency in a fraternity or club, etc.)? _____

23. Of what fraternities or clubs are you a member? _____

24. Have you participated to any extent in any sports (as a group or individually)? _____ What sports? _____

25. Name three recreations or hobbies in which you spend most of your spare time (music, art, etc.). _____

26. Are you earning your way through college? _____
_____ 100% of all expenses
_____ 75% of all expenses
_____ 50% of all expenses
_____ 25% of all expenses
27. What is your best subject? _____ What is your highest grade in this subject? _____ What is your average grade in this subject? _____

28. What is your next best subject? _____ What is your
highest grade in this subject? _____ What is your
average grade in this subject? _____
29. What is your over-all average? _____
30. What are the chief problems confronting you in relation
to your chosen vocation? _____

31. Have you changed in your choice of vocation? _____
What change have you made? _____
How long ago did you make it? _____ What were your
reasons for changing? _____

32. What is your father's vocation? _____
If you have any brothers or sisters, what are their
vocations? _____

33. Father's education:
_____ Grammar School
_____ High School
_____ College
34. Mother's education:
_____ Grammar School
_____ High School
_____ College
35. Have you close relatives in the vocation you have
chosen? _____ What relative(s)? _____

36. In what way can the University help to solve your
vocational problems? _____

